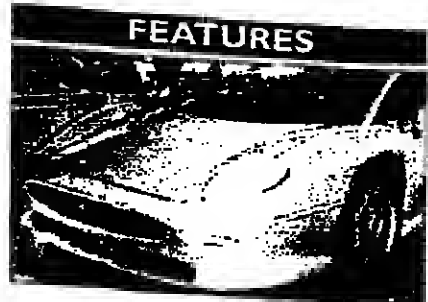




NEWS

DE NIRO AND THE VICE RING
Life imitates the movies in a French court. Page 3



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Why the gas guzzler still has sex appeal. Page 16



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THE INDEPENDENT

Thursday 12 February 1998 45p No 3,532

Massive air strike on Iraq within days

By Rupert Cornwell

THE PROSPECT of a massive aerial assault on Iraq hardened further yesterday, as Britain and the United States rejected a new inspection offer from Baghdad, and the senior US military commander in the Middle East said that he would be ready to strike within a week.

Any hopes of a breakthrough raised by Iraq's offer of opening eight of the "presidential palaces" to a limited two-month inspection by United Nations officials quickly faded, as Washington reiterated its hostility to anything less than unfettered access to the sites where Saddam Hussein is suspected of hiding chemical and biological weapons. "We don't think there should be any deals or compromises," Bill Richardson, the US ambassador to the UN, said last night. That line was echoed by the Foreign Office, which described the concession - of allowing a new team of inspectors appointed by Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary General, to inspect the "palaces" - as "encouraging" but not enough to fulfil existing resolutions of the Security Council.

In the meantime, the build-up for war continues inexorably. As the Pentagon ordered a further 19 warplanes to the Gulf, including six F-117 stealth fighters and seven B-52 bombers, Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni said his forces, spearheaded by 400 strike aircraft and hundreds of cruise missiles, would be ready to go into action "within a week or so". Basically, he said, "we're ready now," but "there are a few more pieces to put in".

Yet more pressure came from Egypt which, like almost every Arab country beyond the Gulf, is hostile to a strike. After meeting the Iraqi foreign minister, Muhammad Said al-Sabha, in Cairo, President Hosni Mubarak said he had told his visitor that implementation of the Security Council resolutions was the only way out of the crisis.

But Mr Sabha's claim that the latest concession effectively covered "all the sites in Iraq" convinced no one. Even France, which will not join in any attack, said more was required, and in a modest display of support both Spain and Italy said they would allow US bases on their soil to be used to support an offensive.

THE INDEPENDENT

Lives are more important than fuzzy symbolism

WHY? FOR WHAT? How much? British forces stand ready in the Gulf. Britain's prestige and international reputation, let alone that of the Prime Minister and his government, are on the line. We have declared our hand as America's junior partner. Yet the purposes of military adventure in Iraq remain fatally unspecified. Until we are given a much clearer idea of exactly what action against Iraq is supposed to accomplish, and where it is to end, the case for British participation remains unmade.

Forty-two years ago, a British Prime Minister ordered Britain's armed forces into the Middle East without enough thought about effect or political consequence. As a result, he felt, having scarred the nation. Suez should have taught us that lives are too precious to risk for the sake of fuzzy symbolism or posture. We need to be crystal clear just what air strikes, cruise missiles, or ground forces are going to accomplish.

The ostensible aim of the US is to compel Saddam Hussein to allow United Nations inspectors unfettered access. But we have to ask: is there any reason to suppose that the Iraqi dictator would be any more willing to co-operate after an attack than he is now? Profound errors of judgement are about to be made. Perhaps President Bush should have pursued the defeated Iraqi army to Baghdad seven years ago and overthrown Saddam Hussein. He did not. Yet now the US, with British support, is seeking to exercise a degree of control over Iraq which only works after the conquest of another country.

We are no apologists for Saddam Hussein. He is a bloody tyrant at home and a persistent worry in the region. But the practical question is deterrence. It must involve the neighbours he threatens. The way forward is not to make inspections the trigger issue, but to return to seeking to forge a military alliance, based on the southern Gulf states, aided by the United States and, yes, Britain too.

During the Gulf war, Saddam had biological and chemical weapons. One reason he did not dare use them was the weight of Arab power ranged against him. Until the kind of coalition created during the Gulf War can be recreated, gung-ho Anglo-American militarism is offensive.

Worse still, it is going to be ineffective.

The chances of avoiding one hinge on whether Baghdad's concession signals the first link on the way to a climb-down, or whether - as seemed more likely last night - it was a futile gambit along what is now a choreographed path to war.

In Britain, the reverberations of the crisis continued. Contradicting the 10 Anglican bishops opposing military strikes, Dr George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, declared that President Saddam's stockpile of weapons of mass destruction meant he could not be permitted to defy the UN.

In the Commons, mean-

while, Tony Blair repeated that military action would come if President Saddam did not comply, while Tony Benn, a leader of the leftwingers opposed to any strikes, predicted they would start after the Commons debate on the crisis next Tuesday.

And in Baghdad, the apparent concessions were mixed with dark forebodings of war. Tariq Aziz, Iraq's deputy prime minister who was foreign minister during the 1991 Gulf War, appealed to Mr Annan to intervene, accusing Britain and the US of deliberately spinning a diplomatic solution.

Crisis latest, page 13



Self.

June 1914: the future King Edward VIII at university war games

When war was just an innocent game for a future king

By Paul Valley

IT WAS June 1914 and war was just a game. For the young man who was to become King Edward VIII - the first British monarch ever willingly to renounce his throne - soldiering was merely one of many ways to pass the time. Little did he and his fellows realise that within a few months war would fall like an axe upon the continent. The ranks of young men who paraded in full-dress review order in the bright sunshine for the King's Birthday Parade would be decimated by the foolish strategies of the man who that day oversaw the march past - Sir Douglas Haig.

The young man in the photograph (left) is Edward, then the Prince of Wales. It is one of the hundreds of historic yet intimate photographs from his own private albums which *The Independent* is publishing for the first time this week. It was taken at Laffan's Plain, near Aldershot, to which he had been summoned as a member of the Oxford Battalion of the Officer Training Corps. The prince was one of its corporals. The photographs we reprint today, many of them taken by Edward himself, are a poignant evocation of that age of innocence which an unexpected war brought to a swift and bloody end.

Until then soldiering was a lark. Today's pictures show the *jeunesse dorée* of that privileged epoch at play. There is polo practice on Port Meadow.

There is hunting with the New College and Magdalen Beagles. There is tea with the Leander Club at Henley. There are antics on - and in - the river. And there is the jolly comradeship of the military life.

"Self" says the caption in Edward's own hand in the first of the two albums which his widow, the Duchess of Windsor, gave after his death to a family friend in France, and from which this week's unguarded pictures are taken. The young prince looks resolute and pur-

The royal albums, pages 18-19

poseful, as he stands legs apart, puffing on his pipe, with the precocious pomposity of youth. But it is all a game. Just like the balls at the Duke of Portland's where he stayed up until 4am. Just like the grouse shooting to which his father, King George V, invited Edward to meet the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The man was Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who only weeks later would fall to an assassin's bullet in Sarajevo, sparking off a war which was to change everything, utterly.



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Today's news

Let us pray

THE Church of England agreed to include a modern version of the Lord's Prayer in a new prayer book to be published in 2000. Page 5

N Ireland crisis

PRESSURE grew for Sinn Féin to be thrown out of multi-party peace talks. Page 2

Inquest welcomed

THE father of journalist Jonathan Moore, found hanging in a South American hotel wardrobe, said he was relieved the inquest was being reopened. Page 4

Champ fails drug test thanks to his dopey friends

By Mike Rowbottom in Nagano, Japan

ROSS REBAGLIATI feared yesterday that he might become the first Olympic champion to lose his title through passive smoking.

The 26-year-old Canadian was appealing against the decision to strip him of the snowboarding gold medal he won at the Winter Games here on Sunday after testing positive for marijuana.

Rebagliati claims it was his environment which was to blame for the illegal levels detected in his urine - specifically, a house full of friends who smoked dope at his Olympic go-

ing-away party. Michael Wood, the Canadian's snowboard team manager, said: "Ross has told me straight up that everyone he knows and associates with is a user."

Rebagliati added that all his housemates - whom he had last seen at the party on 31 January - regularly used marijuana.

However, the man who claimed snowboarding's first-ever Olympic title maintains that he has not used marijuana himself since April of last year. His position, it seems, is an inverted model of Bill Clinton's - he inhaled, but he did not smoke.

Marijuana is on the International Olympic Commit-

tee's list of banned drugs because it is said to convey the wrong image, rather than because it is performance-enhancing. Alcohol is also banned.

The International Ski Federation, anticipating the defence that Rebagliati has put forward, allows for a low level of marijuana (which the Canadian just exceeded), but the Olympic authorities forbid the drug altogether.

This latest Olympic embarrassment has brought a knowing smile to the faces of those who follow snowboarding - a wild child of a sport which has been embraced by an Olympic movement eager for its youthful attraction. Since it origi-

nated as a snowbound version of surfing in the United States in the late 1960s snowboarding has embraced the watersport's alternative culture - which includes widespread recreational drug use.

The IOC's executive board agreed, albeit by a 3-2 margin with two abstentions, that Rebagliati had taken the central tenet of the Olympic motto - faster, higher, stronger - too literally. And that may not be the end of Rebagliati's problems. Japan's drug laws are notoriously strict and Nagano police said yesterday they were planning to interview him over the matter.



Sport, page 30 Rebagliati: faster, higher



déclaration
new eau de toilette for men

by
Cartier

Available from Cartier boutiques, Harrods, Harvey Nichols, Selfridges and selected branches of Aitlers, Debenhams, Fenwick, House of Fraser, John Lewis Partnership and leading independent perfumeries.

Sinn Fein faces talks expulsion

By Kim Sengupta

The peace process in Ulster was last night facing its greatest threat since the current ceasefire began, as it looked increasingly likely that Sinn Fein will be expelled from the multi-party negotiations into the future of the province.

The RUC yesterday questioned seven IRA suspects over the murder of senior UDA member Bobby Dougan. If it is proved that the killers belong to the IRA then Sinn Fein's participation in the talks is thought to be untenable.

Mr Dougan was the second man to be killed by republican terrorists within 24 hours. Earlier drug dealer Brendan Campbell was shot, it is thought, by gunmen from Direct Action Against Drugs (DAAD), an IRA front organisation.

Mark "Swinger" Fulton, a friend of the murdered former leader of the Loyalist Volunteer Force, Billy Wright, escaped a murder bid in Portadown which he blamed on the Progressive Unionist Party and its military wing the Ulster Volunteer Force - a claim denied by DUP spokesman David Irvine.

While investigations continued into the two murders, the security forces prepared for possible loyalist revenge attacks on Catholics, and also the prospect of internecine warfare

between Protestant paramilitaries.

Some of the senior political leaders at the talks privately said the IRA was split over the process after the series of loyalist murders of Catholics, and Mr Adams appeared to have lost ground against those calling for a return to conflict.

Ms Mowlem, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, gave the clearest signal so far that Sinn Fein could be thrown out of the talks, if hard evidence emerges of a link between the killings and the IRA.

Deploing the murders, which were condemned on all sides, she told MPs that it had not been "reliably established" that the IRA was responsible. "If and when it is, the Government will not hesitate to act to determine whether the party concerned has demonstrably dishonoured its commitment to the Mitchell principles."

Ms Mowlem insisted that the talks process could go on without Sinn Fein, with John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party representing the nationalist community. "We still sticking by the 'sufficient consensus' rule. The SDLP are there and we should go ahead," she said.

The talks are now likely to be dominated by Unionists' demands for Sinn Fein to be removed when they resume in



Missed target: Mark Fulton, left, with his friend Billy Wright, who was murdered by the INLA Photograph: Alan Lewis

Dublin on Monday, causing embarrassment for the Irish Government, which is the host for the talks.

The Ulster Democratic Party, linked to the Ulster Defence

Association and the Ulster Freedom Fighters, was thrown out of the negotiations last month after the UFF admitted involvement in three murders of Catholics.

One of the options being considered, according to Northern Ireland Office sources, is to suspend rather than expel Sinn Fein, with the party being allowed back into the negotiations

after a suitable period as long as the IRA maintain the ceasefire. Loyalist opposition to this, it is held, can be tempered with the same offer being made to the UDP.

Police on manslaughter charges over death in custody

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

THREE POLICE officers are to be prosecuted for the manslaughter of an Irishman who died after he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly.

The decision to press charges against the Metropolitan Police officers is an astonishing about-turn by Crown prosecutors who originally de-

cided that there was not sufficient evidence. The Director of Public Prosecutions, Dame Barbara Mills, only sanctioned her officials to re-examine three deaths in police custody cases last July because she was forced to by the courts.

A statement by the Crown Prosecution Service last night admitted "errors were made". The announcement reinforces long-held criticisms of the way

in which police cases are dealt with by the CPS.

The three policemen, aged 27, 31, and 33, are charged with the manslaughter of Richard O'Brien, 37, who died in Walworth, south London, in April 1994. They are due to appear at Bow Street magistrates' court on 8 April.

An inquest jury ruled in November 1995 that Mr O'Brien had been unlawfully killed. The

police told the inquest that Mr O'Brien, a 19-and-a-half stone market trader from Dulwich, south London was drunk and disorderly.

He allegedly fell to the ground with five police officers. He was later carried to a police van. He lost consciousness while at a police station and was pronounced dead on arrival at King's College Hospital. The pathologist, Dr Vesna

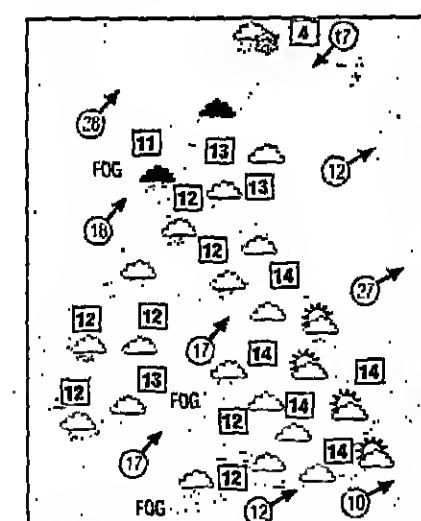
Djurovic, said Mr O'Brien had 31 sites of injury on his body, including cuts and bruising to his face, a dislodged tooth and fractured ribs. Dr Djurovic gave the cause of death as "postural asphyxia following a struggle against restraint."

In October 1996, the CPS decided there was insufficient evidence for a prosecution. For nearly four years his widow, Alison, has fought for a prose-

cution of the police officers involved in arresting Mr O'Brien. Following judicial reviews in the Divisional Court in July 1997, the DPP was forced to reconsider three deaths in custody cases.

The CPS said yesterday: "The CPS accepts errors were made in the original [O'Brien] decision-making process and have today written to lawyers acting for the family."

WEATHER

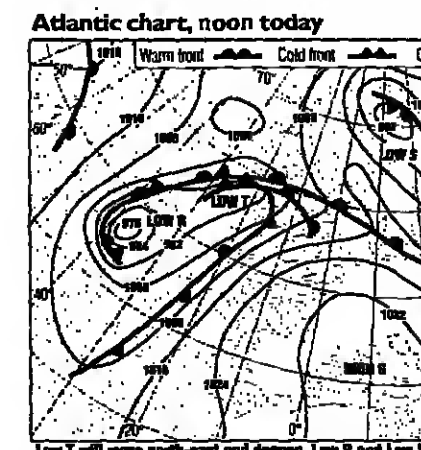


Noon today

Mild everywhere. Central and southern England will be cloudy at times but mostly dry with the best sunny breaks in the east. Wales will also be rather cloudy with some drizzly rain in the north, but elsewhere it will be dry. Northern England will have some early patchy drizzle but the afternoon should be drier and brighter. Northern Ireland will be mostly cloudy with rain in the north. Scotland will be dull and damp, the heaviest of the rain in the north with a drier, brighter

Outlook for the next few days

Mild across the country on Friday. Most of England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be cloudy but dry while Scotland will have further rain. The weekend will see rain spreading from Scotland into northern England but the south should stay dry and mild. There are no signs of any significantly colder weather spreading across the country for the coming week but many parts will see further rain, with the exception of the south-east where it will remain mostly dry.



Low T will move north-east and deepen. Low H and Low S will fill. High S remains almost stationary.

Air quality

Region	PM10	PM2.5	SO2	NO2
London	Moderate	Good	Good	Good
SE England	Moderate	Good	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good	Good	Good
SE England	Moderate	Good	Good	Good
N England	Good	Good	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good	Good	Good

British Isles weather

Region	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
London	12-14	Light	Partly	None
SE	12-14	Light	Partly	None
Wales	11-13	Light	Partly	None
SE	12-14	Light	Partly	None
N	11-13	Light	Partly	None
Scotland	10-12	Light	Partly	None
N Ireland	11-13	Light	Partly	None

High tides

Location	Time	Height
Liverpool	11:56	9.3
Avonmouth	07:52	13.1
Hull (Albert Dock)	07:00	8.3
Greenwich	01:18	3.1
Dun Laoghaire		12:12

Lighting-up times

Location	Time
Belfast	17:25
Birmingham	17:14
Bristol	17:20
Glasgow	17:14
London	17:10
Manchester	17:13
Newcastle	17:06

Sun & moon

Sun rises	07:21
Moon rises	15:31
Sun sets	17:10
Moon sets	07:41

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 401777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

World weather

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Precip
Amsterdam	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Alexandria	18-21	Light	Partly	None
Algiers	19-23	Light	Partly	None
Almaty	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Ankara	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Athens	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Auckland	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Bahia	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Bangkok	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Batavia	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Bombay	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Buenos Aires	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Calcutta	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Canton	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Cebu	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Colon	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Hankow	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Hong Kong	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Kobe	15-19	Light	Partly	None
London	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Lyons	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Manila	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Medan	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Meppen	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Moscow	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Mumbai	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Nagasaki	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Nanking	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Norfolk	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Osaka	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Paris	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Peking	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Perth	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Rangoon	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Reykjavik	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Rio de Janeiro	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Rome	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Singapore	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Sourabaya	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Tientsin	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Tokyo	15-19	Light	Partly	None
Yokohama	15-19	Light	Partly	None



WILLIAM HARTSTON
WEATHER WISE

The gloriously mild weather in the south-east over the past couple of days has increased my sense of urgency to get on with a little experiment I have been planning for some time. The objective is to come up with a formula for estimating the temperature, based on a survey of the outer clothing worn by a sample of people observed going to work in the morning.

When it was first decided, about a quarter of a century ago, to phase out Fahrenheit temperature and replace them with Celsius (which we then

called Centigrade), I heard a good instant guide to the new system: at 10°C a man takes his coat off, at 20°C he sheds his jacket, and at 30°C shirts are removed. More recently, however, I have learnt that the system may be extended for colder conditions: when the temperature drops to 5°C, scarves are added, and when it hits zero, hats and gloves appear too.

What I plan to do over the next few weeks - if the cold weather returns - is to keep records of the numbers of hats, coats, scarves and gloves being worn by fellow bus-passengers each morning, then correlate the percentages wearing each garment with the temperature.

Initially at least, the sample will have to be limited to male commuters because of the hat factor. I understand that some females don millinery more as a fashion statement than as protection against the weather, and such behaviour would produce an unwanted bias in the figures. Ultimately, we should be able to produce a formula of the form: $T = K - (hH + gG + sS + cC)$ which will enable the temperature T to be calculated from the percentages H, C, G and S of

men wearing hats, coats, gloves and scarves respectively. All that remains is to work out the value of the constant K and the weightings h, c, g, and s to be given to each garment. Ultimately, we may refine the figures to include such measures as H_f (the percentage wearing furry hats) and C_w and C_d (raincoats and winter coats).

If this works, we should be able to dispense with the rather cumbersome formulae currently being used to assess wind-chill factor, which is the cooling effect caused by the cold wind constantly blowing away the comforting duvet of warm air that our bodies exude around them to protect from the external chilliness.

I do not know what clothing people shed if the temperature reaches 38.9°C, but it would bring a particularly warm feeling to one person in Hayle in Cornwall. For bookmakers William Hill report that one such man has placed a £2,500 bet at odds of 20 to 1 that the temperature in England, Scotland or Wales will, at some time this year, reach a record 100°F. In view of this large wager, the odds have already dropped to 14 to 1.

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Recycled paper made up 41.4% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1997.

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HALIFAX
Get a little extra help.

I was molested as a child, says Amis



Amis: Assaulted three times

By Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The novelist Martin Amis has told an American Internet magazine that he was sexually molested on three occasions when he was a child.

Amis told *Salon*, a magazine produced by the Borders bookstore chain, that writing about his cousin Lucy Partington triggered the memory of his experiences.

Lucy Partington disappeared in 1973 and was sexually abused and murdered by the serial killers Rose and Fred West. The best-selling author, and son of the novelist Kingsley Amis, was discussing the difficulty of writing about his own life in his planned autobiography when he casually remarked that writing about Lucy Partington had been like writing about himself.

"I realised that that had been knocking around in my unconscious, and so I was writing about her and Fred West. I also found that I was writing about three occasions in my life where I was molested as a child by strangers."

"Once by a couple. There was a party going on at the house. I was nine years old in my bedroom. He said he was a doctor. She just stood at the door. That sort of thing gets you going off into strange areas."

He also said he had been molested, apparently by different adults, in the street and on a beach on other occasions.

The disclosure obviously affected the novelist. When pressed by the interviewer about how these experiences disturbed his feelings of security, he took a long pause and then broke off the subject of his abuse. He then moved the interview on to the difficulties of writing memoirs compared with fiction.

The author of *London Fields* and *Time's Arrow* dedicated his book *The Information* to his cousin after her remains were found in the West's Gloucester garden. Lucy, who was at Exeter University at the time of her disappearance, was the daughter of his mother's sister. She was visiting a friend in Cheltenham and disappeared for 23 years after missing her last bus home.

Amis announced in an interview last year that his memoirs would be partly about his own life, and his relationship with his father, but would also tell the story of his cousin's short life.

Lucy was described by those who knew her as sensitive and intelligent young woman destined for great things. She wanted to be a writer herself and was studying Middle English at the time of her murder.

Literary experts last night could identify no explicit references to child abuse in Amis's work. The only exception is the character Nicola Six in *London Fields*. Six displays some of the self-destructive and co-dependent characteristics of an abuse victim, along with an unhealthy attitude to sex.

Amis has been the subject of much negative press coverage in recent years after what appeared to be signs of a classic mid-life crisis; he left his wife, changed agent and negotiated himself a £1m advance for four books and confessed to spending £12,000 getting his teeth fixed.

De Niro fury over vice case that echoes the movies

From John Lichfield in Paris

THE ACTOR Robert De Niro yesterday sued a French judge who questioned him on Tuesday about his involvement with an international prostitution agency.

French judicial sources say that the actor is regarded as a potential witness, not a suspect, in a case which already reads like a plot from an implausible airport novel. It is alleged that Mr De Niro was approached by the agency about a possible sexual encounter with a teenage girl but that no meeting ever took place.

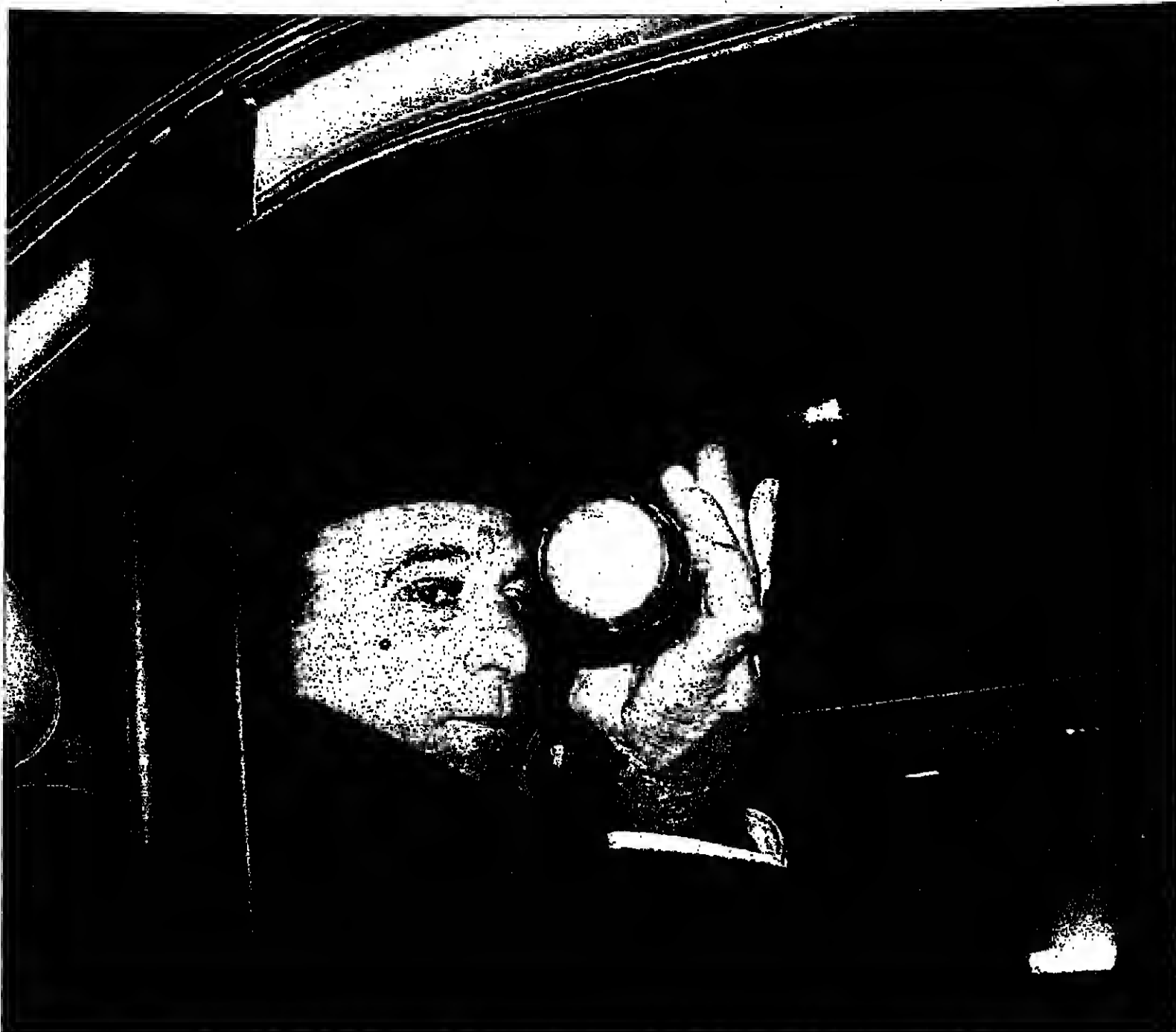
If De Niro is not a suspect, his lawyer, Georges Kiejman, asked, why did agents of the French vice squad, in effect arrest him outside his hotel in Paris on Tuesday? He had already offered his full co-operation. Why were the press immediately informed, although the investigation is supposed under French law to be secret?

Mr Kiejman brought actions yesterday against the judge leading the investigation for violating the privacy and right to freedom of movement of his client. He accused the judge, Frederic N'Guyen, of flagrant publicity seeking and personally leaking news of the actor's questioning to the media.

Mr N'Guyen's 15-month investigation has already led him into legal and diplomatic murky waters, involving Saudi and Gulf princes, secret agents, Hollywood actresses, sports stars, high-class prostitution and arms contracts.

Six people, including the former Polish tennis star Wojtek Fibak, have been placed under formal examination - a step short of a charge - for their involvement with a global call-girl ring run from an apartment in Paris. Mr Fibak faces a possible charge of rape, after a young woman claimed that he paid the agency to have sex with her against her will. He denies the accusation.

Several other witnesses have told the judge that - in a deal brokered by the agency - an American actress accepted \$1m for a sexual encounter in the South of France with a member of a Gulf royal family. The newspaper *Le Figaro* reported yesterday that Judge N'Guyen would like to question Brigitte Nielsen, the actress and former wife of Sylvester Stallone, about these allegations. Ms Nielsen has already been linked to the story and has adamantly denied it.



Robert De Niro uses a torch in an attempt to stop photographs being taken after he was interviewed by Judge N'Guyen in Paris. Photograph: Gamma



Brigitte Nielsen: denies rumours of \$1m liaison

The investigation began in October 1996 with the routine hugging and phone tapping of a suspected prostitution ring, operating from the 16th arrondissement, one of the wealthiest areas of Paris. The inquiry led to the arrest in January last year of a Swedish former model, Annika Brumark, the apparent head of the organisation. Other arrests included a photographer, Jean-Pierre Bourgeois, who specialised in glamour shots for nymphet magazines, and a Lebanese businessman called Nazihadulatis Al Laddi.

Investigators seized diaries, records and address books with the names of young women, and their clients, from all over the world, from Britain to Indonesia by way of the United States. Mr Al Laddi also revealed the names of other alleged clients, including Saudi and Gulf princes. He told investigators that the service had been used for many years by big business, especially the French arms industry, as a way of

sweetening contracts with Arab states. The previous French government tried to block the investigation because of its possible impact on arms sales. The socialist-led coalition which took power last June have given Judge N'Guyen more freedom of action. He has already been accused of using the case to ag-

grandise his reputation more than to unravel the truth. Under French law all details of an investigation by an examining magistrate are supposed to be strictly confidential.

Mr Kiejman, yesterday described him as a "judge driven by strong narcissistic impulses and a strong desire for publicity".

Worms that make sex their weapon

By Louise Jury and Nicholas Schoon

HERMAPHRODITE marine flatworms bury their feminine side and behave in the most crude, macho fashion when it comes to mating, indulging in swordplay with their penises.

And female oystercatchers are frequently seen to indulge in lesbian copulation when they share a male. These observations, new to science, are in the latest edition of *Nature*.

The flatworms have a full set of female and male equipment. One assumes those in touch with their feminine side would lie back and think of the Great Barrier Reef, but they all want to be the impregnator and penetrator. The only way of resolving who gets to play the male is by duel. Flatworms go sharp-tipped penis to penis; the loser is the first to be impaled, receiving sperm by hypodermic injection from its fencing partner. The mating ritual of *Pseudoceros bifurcus* was discovered by German researchers: Australian scientists watched duels among 17 pairs of the worms.

At Groningen University, in the Netherlands, researchers have been studying oystercatchers, normally monogamous, although 3 per cent of females share a male. Half of these love triangles involve "highly aggressive" relations between the females. But in the other half they share one nest and the male harmoniously, defend their territory against other oystercatchers and copulate regularly with each other and the male. The scientists suggest the females may be signalling they are a functioning family unit and intruders had better beware.

WEIRD STORIES OF 1996

1. Sex: Surgeons in Bangkok successfully re-attached the penis of a police sergeant after it had been severed by his wife as he slept following an argument over a love affair. Such cases are not uncommon in Thailand where they are known as "feeding the ducks", after one case in which the severed organ was thrown into a duck pond.
2. Death: Zhao Jun, a farm worker from Sichuan province in China, died from a burst intestine after eating eight bowls of gruel when trying to win a bet for a packet of cigarettes.
3. Swedish designer Ann-Kristin Antman produced an anorak from 20 salmon skins soaked in five litres of urine donated by members of her family. "It is a method used during the Stone Age in Sweden," she said, explaining that the treatment made the material waterproof. "The smell disappears when you rinse the skins in water."
4. Medicine: Research at Harvard Medical School reported that sexual activity has "a low likelihood of triggering a myocardial infarction". The risk of a healthy person suffering a heart attack because of sexual activity was shown to be about one in a million, and only two in a million for someone with heart disease.
5. Crime: A thief was arrested in Bangkok after he had snatched a woman's purse then hidden in the lavatory of a police station. He had mistaken the Thai-style roof of the rest-room for that of a Buddhist temple. His prolonged occupation of the room aroused police suspicions.

PMT blamed for rise in the wacky tales index

By William Hartston

THE FT Index has risen by 4 per cent in the last year, and they are blaming PMT. This, however, has nothing to do with economics or hormones, for the report comes from the *Portsmouth Times*, the journal of curious phenomena, which calculates its own FT Weirdness Index each year, based on the numbers of news stories monitored in each of 34 categories.

"1997 was by far the weirdest year since our records began," said Joe McNally, the associate editor. He expects the index to continue rising "as a result of PMT, Pre-Millennial Tension".

The basis on which the figure is calculated, however, seems far from rigorous. Each year since 1993, the number of stories in each weirdness category is counted and compared with that of the previous year. If it is higher, then the index

for that category goes up by 10 points, if lower, then it decreases by ten. The overall index is a simple sum of the scores in all 34 categories from "Water Monsters" to "Spontaneous Human Combustion", from "UFOs" to "Ineptitude and Stupidity". Since the index began, the most consistent patterns have been the rise in sightings of "Alien Big Cats" and "Cults and Conspiracies" (both now standing at an all-time high index figure of 140) and the decreasing interest in "Crop Circles" (down to 60).

But was 1997 really weirder than 1996? The index comes with a credibility warning: "This index represents media interest in weirdness, not weirdness itself." It is also based on a quantitative account of weird stories, with no attempt to assess how weird each story is. As these examples show, from a qualitative point of view any difference between 1996 and 1997 is too close to call.

WEIRD STORIES OF 1997

1. Sex: A 48-year-old Californian pipe-fitter who claimed that a woman called Brenda had cut off his penis later admitted that he had done it himself. Surgeons were unable to reattach the organ.
2. Death: An employee in an Egyptian mortuary collapsed and died when a body he had been sent to collect from the refrigerator got out of its coffin and stood up. Abdel-Satar Badawi woke from a coma after 12 hours in the morgue. "I moved my hands and pushed the coffin's lid to find myself among the dead," he said.
3. Waste products: Rice farmers in Laos were reported to be winning the battle against snails by sprinkling pig manure over the plants. Apart from the success in keeping away snails, rice yield has also risen because of the manure's quality as fertiliser.
4. Medicine: The British Medical Journal reported a study showing that people with coronary heart disease wave their arms around more than people free of cardiac complaints. But they say it is unclear whether people who gesture more are more prone to heart disease, or whether heart disease causes agitation which makes people wave their arms more.
5. Crime: A bank robber in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, handed the teller a note demanding money and threatening to set off a bomb. She asked him to wait, so he stood in line for 20 minutes until she returned with a bag containing \$1,500. He was arrested as he left the bank.

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By Andrew Buncombe

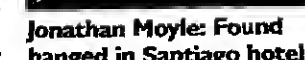
A Customs and Excise source

The wedding is set to take place next summer.



By Ian Burrell

When news of his death was relayed to the Moyle family there was immediate disbelief.



Nearly eight years on and with Britain again on the verge of war with Iraq, the Moyles hope that the authorities will help them to establish the truth.

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Synod changes the Lord's Prayer

By Clare Garner

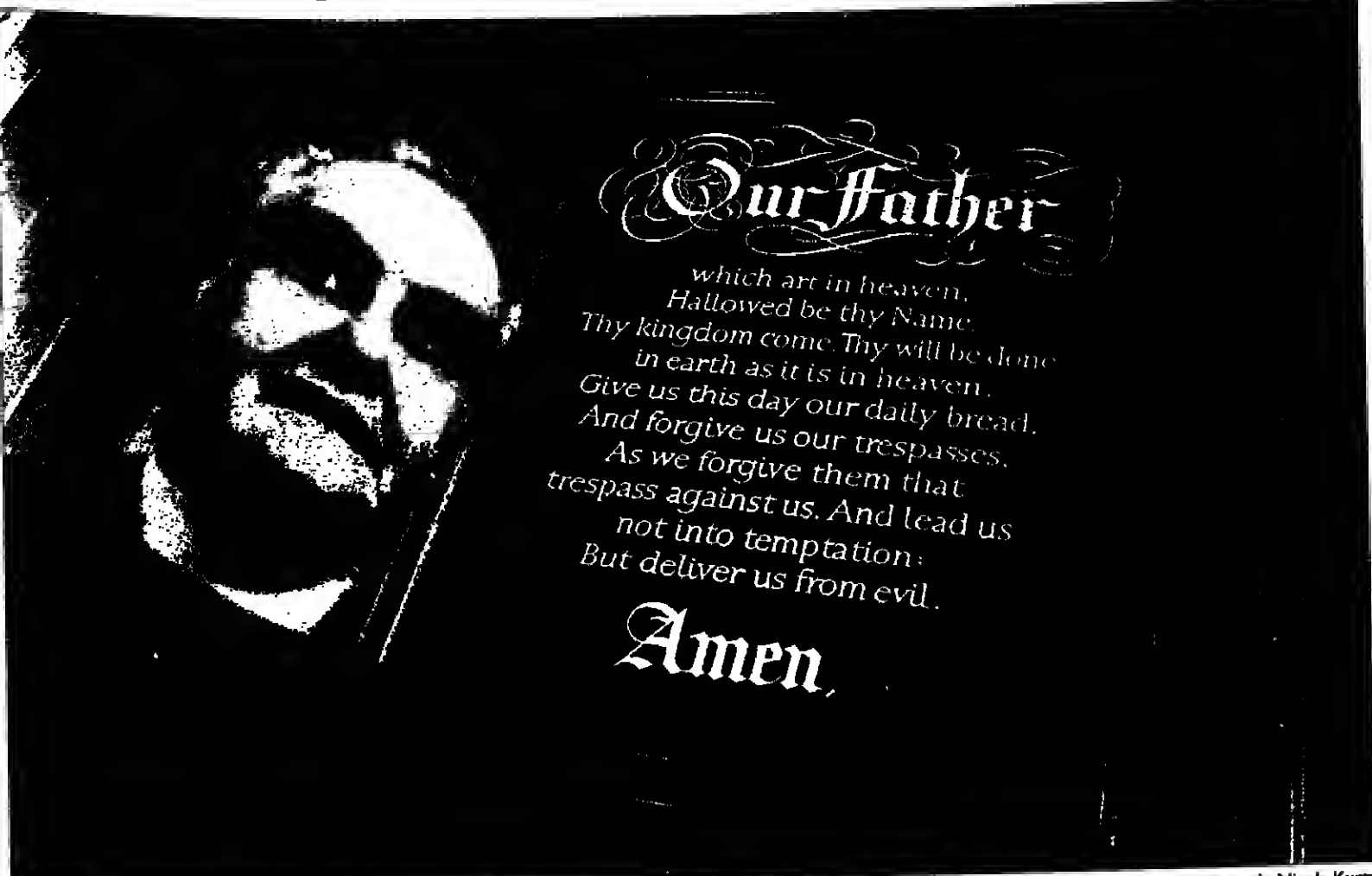
TRADITIONALISTS in the Church of England suffered a severe setback yesterday as members of the General Synod voted overwhelmingly in favour of the modern version of the Lord's Prayer being printed alongside the older version in the new service books.

Their more recent translation, which substitutes the words "Save us from the time of trial" for "And lead us not into temptation", will be given equal prominence in Common Worship, the service guide which will be in use from 2001.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Right Rev Peter Nott, made an impassioned plea that the newer, plain English version should be relegated to the appendix for the sake of simplicity and poetry. He said that the fact the traditional version was less readily understood did not matter. "There is a limit to human understanding in matters of religion, and particularly in prayer which is not only not even principally a mental exercise."

"Beauty of language in liturgy is as important as accuracy of translation. And it is beauty that makes language memorable, and by repetition enables it to be learned by heart. We are in grave danger of losing the whole concept of common prayer, and one reason is because we have almost entirely lost the concept of learning prayer by heart - almost, but not quite."

In a recent ballot carried out on behalf of the Church's millennium team, 82 per cent of people said they could recite the Lord's Prayer; the version to which they were referring was the traditional one. However, among 16- to 25-year-olds, 55 per cent said they knew the Lord's Prayer by heart. The bishop



New for old: The Rev John Paul at St Andrew by the Wardrobe in the City of London explaining the changes to the Lord's Prayer. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

continued: "We have tried the new version for years and it has not gained much in popularity except among enthusiasts, and certainly is totally unknown by those precious people who do not worship regularly in our churches but whom we are called to love unconditionally, to welcome and to serve."

Synod members voted to include the modern version in the main body of the service book by a majority of 272 to 68. In his presidential address at

the end of Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, insisted that the church did not adopt modernity for the sake of it. "... a facile preoccupation with being modern - or even post-modern - can lead one to neglect the eternal truths and the abiding values which people everywhere always need, and the cumulative insights and wisdom of previous generations. Rather we need to be discriminating in our attitudes to reform," he said.

THE TRADITIONAL VERSION

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name:
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that
trespass against us. And lead us
not into temptation:
But deliver us from evil.
Amen.

THE NEW VERSION

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
As we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours
Now and for ever.
Amen.

The toll of impotence

Relationships are being destroyed by impotence, with more than 20 per cent of sufferers reporting a break-up because of the problem, a survey disclosed yesterday.

Yet according to the Impotence Association, which represents men with erectile dysfunction, the majority of cases are treatable. The Association survey of 432 sufferers and 194 part-takers was published two days before National Impotence Day, February 14, which coincides with Valentine's Day. At the same time a new non-injectible treatment for impotence was launched by London-based Astra Pharmaceuticals. The survey showed that 21 per cent of sufferers blamed the break up of a relationship on impotence.

Dead man a police informer

A man shot dead in a "professional hit" on Tuesday night was a police informer who gave evidence against a London drugs gang, James Lawson - not thought to be his real name - who was shot several times at his home in Hook, Hampshire, had been moved to Hampshire from the capital by the Metropolitan police after turning "grass" at a drugs trial, it is believed.

The man was taken to Basingstoke District Hospital, where he died several hours later. Police said he would not be officially named until he had been identified by next of kin.

No hope for Pooh Five

Winnie the Pooh is enjoying life in New York and the Government has no intention of campaigning to bring him home, the arts minister, Mark Fisher, announced last night. The revelation in a Commons written answer followed an appeal by the Labour MP Gwyneth Dunwoody for Pooh to be repatriated along with Piglet, Kanga, Eeyore and Tigger. Mrs Dunwoody raised the issue last week during Tony Blair's visit to Washington after finding the dolls in a New York public library.

Farming threat to frogs

The frog population is under threat from agricultural pollution which affects tadpoles, according to a new study. A team from the University of Zurich found that the fungicide triphenyltin caused deformity and death in several frog species even at low concentrations. *New Scientist* magazine reported. The chemical is mainly used to control blight in sugar beet and potatoes, but is also used on celery, carrots, onions, rice, pecan nuts, peanuts, hops and coffee.

Skydiver feared drowned

A British skydiver feared drowned in Thailand after a freak wind blew him out to sea is a veteran with more than 700 jumps behind him, his parachute club said last night. Stephen O'Brien was one of 14 parachutists taking part in an aerial display above a Thailand beach resort when he was blown up to three miles from the coast by a strong gust on Tuesday.

Life in jail proposed for Aids infectors

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

People who deliberately spread the Aids virus can be jailed for life, the Government has proposed, but the new laws will mean that anyone who infects their partner by reckless behaviour will escape prosecution.

The proposed changes will also counter supermarket terrorists who inject diseases into foodstuffs and muggers who attack with syringes filled with HIV-infected blood.

As revealed in *The Independent* on Sunday, the Government yesterday published its plans for a major overhaul of the laws on assault.

The most controversial aspect of the changes to the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, which covers crimes such as grievous bodily harm and actual bodily harm, are those involving the transmission of illness and disease. The reforms are aimed at modernising what is considered to be an outdated and confusing piece of legislation.

Under the proposals, which the Home Office hopes to pub-

lish as a Bill in the autumn, it will no longer be illegal to act recklessly and pass on the HIV virus. At present if someone knowingly has Aids, but keeps it a secret from their sexual partner who later becomes infected, they can be prosecuted from GBH, ABH, or unlawful wounding.

The Home Office wants to tighten up the law and has proposed restricting it just to people who deliberately transmit a disease intending to cause a serious illness. The maximum sentence for this offence is life in jail.

The Home Office has ignored advice of the Law Commission which recommended creating an offence of reckless transmission of disease.

A consultative document published yesterday said the changes aimed to "strike a sensible balance between allowing very serious intentional acts to be punished whilst not rendering individuals liable for prosecution for unintentional or reckless acts ...". The Home Office is particularly concerned about deterring people from taking Aids tests.

A draft Bill contained in the

consultation document proposes changing the current assault offences, which account for about 80,000 prosecutions a year, into four more up-to-date and clearer crimes. They are: intentional serious injury, with a maximum penalty of life; reckless serious injury with a maximum seven-year jail term; intentional or reckless injury with a five-year upper limit; and assault with a six-month maximum prison term.

There will also be a new offence of threatening to kill or seriously injure a third party, for example someone's boyfriend or mother. Offenders could face 10 years in jail for the crime.

The proposal which involves Aids offences was given a cautious welcome by the Terrence Higgins Trust, which provides help for people with HIV.

Chief executive Nick Partridge said: "It is the very rare case of deliberate infection which should be an offence. What is essential is that the law is clear and not open to malicious misuse."

But the George House Trust in Manchester is still opposed to any changes.

Prison staff lack training to restrain aggressive inmates

By Ian Burrell

THE MAJORITY of British prison staff are not legally entitled to take action to stop rioting if it breaks out among inmates. Prison Service security reports seen by *The Independent* show that less than 40 per cent of prison officers and only 10 per cent of governors are legally able to carry out "control and restraint" techniques, although these are considered a mandatory requirement for all jail staff.

This means that, in the event of aggressive behaviour by a prisoner, most officers are not allowed to lay hands on the inmate.

The problems are worst at some of the highest-security prisons. At Wakefield, a high-risk dispersal prison, inspectors note that only 17 per cent of staff are trained in restraining prisoners. "This establishment has a serious deficit of trained staff at C&R basic level," the inspectors report.

At Eastwood Park, Littlehey and Holme House prisons and

Northallerton young offenders' institution, none of the staff have received their minimum C&R training.

At Highpoint prison in Suffolk, the only staff legally entitled to lay hands on inmates are four instructors. The jail has no fire resistant clothing and is not able to provide support to other jails if rioting breaks out elsewhere. The inspectors note: "There is a grave danger of some serious mishap occurring."

The crisis stems from a decision by prison service chiefs, just over a year ago, to introduce new rules on training staff in control and restraint following the death of a remand prisoner at Belmarsh prison in south-east London.

Kenneth Severin, 25, died after a struggle in his strip cell in which six officers were used to restrain him. An inquest at Southwark Coroner's Court in December 1996 heard from prison nurses that he had been agitated and that when he was being subdued he shouted out

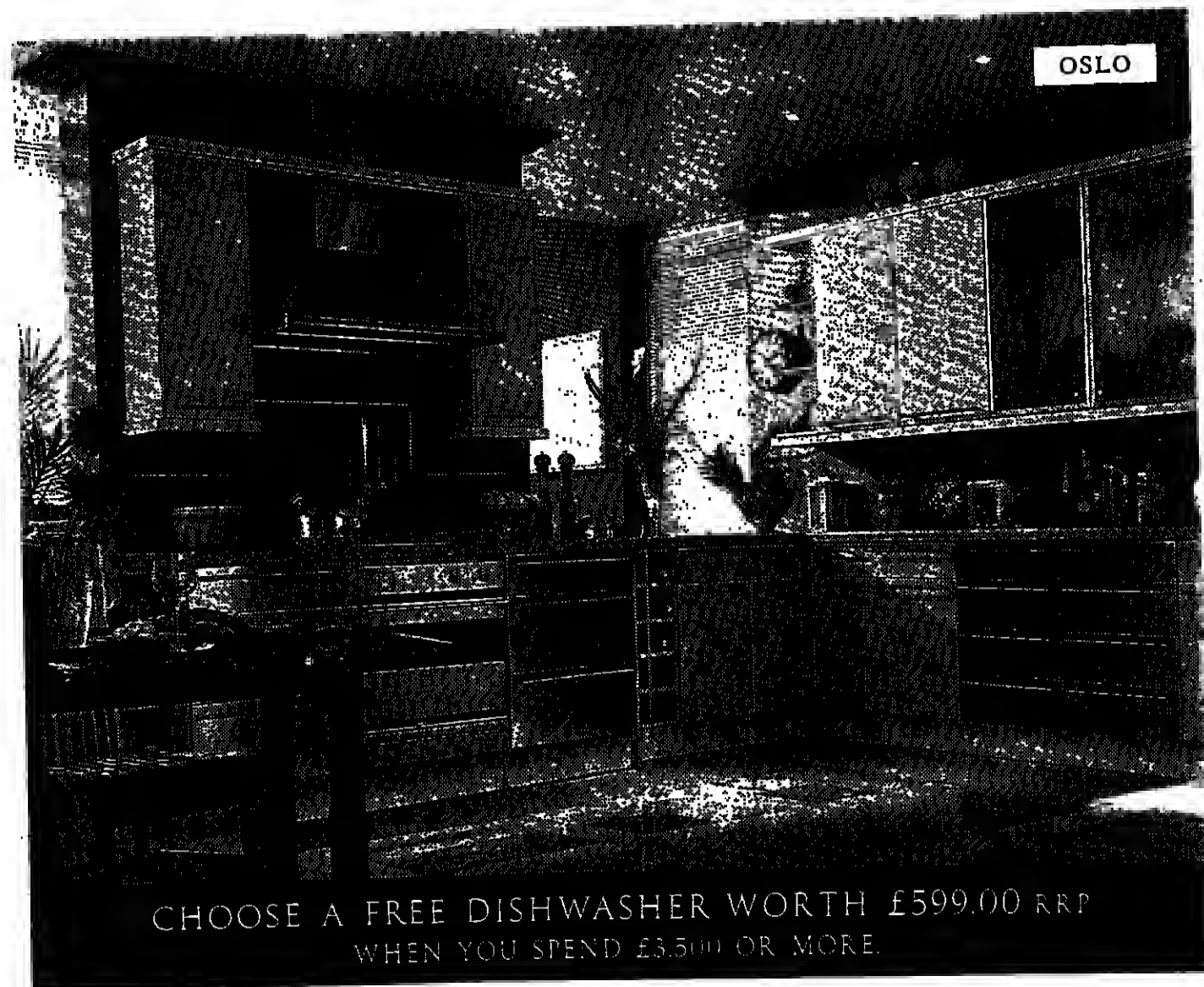
for the police. "Gradually his voice got lower and lower, fading away ... then his voice stopped," one of the nurses said.

The hearing was told that the Prison Service recognised the potential dangers with C&R and had introduced a new regulation stating that any member of staff carrying out control and restraint must have undergone at least eight hours of refresher training within the past 12 months. The reports show the training has not been adequately carried out.

But Bev Lord, of the Prison Officers' Association, said the lack of C&R training was an indication of the Prison Service's lack of concern for the safety of staff and inmates alike. "We will not allow this situation to continue."

Last night the Prison Service said: "We maintain that prison staff have been given the fundamental C&R training necessary to carry out their work. We are seeking to rectify any deficiencies in refresher training as soon as possible."



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IND 20

Motorists to be tested for drugs in voluntary trial

By Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

THOUSANDS OF motorists will be tested for drugs in the next few months as part of Government trials designed to measure the impact of drug-taking on driving.

From next month, police in Cleveland, Lancashire, Strathclyde and Sussex will be allowed to stop drivers and, if the motorists consent, administer a drug test. More than 5,000 tests will be conducted.

The moves were announced as the Government released the results of a study into drug-driving. It found that 18 per cent of drivers involved in fatal accidents had taken illegal drugs - including amphetamines, methadone, opiates and cannabis.

Ministers were keen to stress that no action would be taken against any driver who tested positive. "The equipment being used has not been approved," said Baroness Hayman, the roads minister. "The roadside tests are just to check that the equipment works and give officers training to recognise the signs of drug-impaired."

Government sources said that in Germany, police officers

decided to prosecute motorists if similar drug roadside tests proved positive - and "only three dozen people came forward in months".

Two devices will be tested. Drugwipe takes a specimen of sweat from the forehead. Any drug traces detected will cause a colour change on a strip visible to the eye.

The Drugwipe test for specific drugs - cannabis, amphetamines including ecstasy, cocaine and opiates - so that if a police officer wishes to check for more than one drug type, a separate device will be required for each test. The cost for testing each drug, according to Drugwipe's director, Ean Lewin, is "about £8.50".

The second device, manufactured by Cozart, requires a saliva specimen. Again, drug traces result in a colour change, which would be displayed electronically - but only one sample needs to be taken. The device can identify five different drug groups. "The machine is 95 per cent accurate," said Philip Hand, a director of Cozart, "which is comparable to conventional laboratory urine tests".

Neither device, however, give indications as to the con-

centration of the drug present. A looming hurdle for legislators is determining what a "safe" level of drugs in the blood would be for drivers. Baroness Hayman said that the effects of cannabis "probably only lasted for hours".

Keith Hellawell, the UK anti-drugs co-ordinator, said the results could lead to acceptable limits being set for motorists. "We need to know how much of a particular substance affects a particular person," he said.

New drug-driving data, released at a conference organised by the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Transport Safety, analysed the bodies of 619 fatalities from road crashes.

Of the 284 drivers killed, 27 had smoked cannabis - by far the most prevalent illegal drug found in the bloodstreams of the dead. Very few of the bodies tested showed traces of ecstasy - despite the drug being taken by 500,000 people in the UK.

The figures are based on the first 15 months of a three-year study into the incidence of drugs in road accident victims. The results showed there had been a sixfold increase in the presence of illicit drugs in drivers killed since the last survey - conducted more than a decade ago.



Share to learn: Pupils from Portsmouth Grammar School at HMS Victory yesterday for the launch of a scheme to link local independent and state schools which aims to share best practice as well as offering pupils coaching by leading musicians and sports people. Photograph: John Voos

Private schools told to extend state sector links

By Judith Judd
Education Editor

INDEPENDENT schools must work harder at setting up educational links with state schools, Stephen Byers, the school standards minister said yesterday.

Mr Byers welcomed a survey showing that more than three-quarters of private schools have at least one joint activity with either the local community or state school. But he said that the Government's initiative to foster partnership between state and private schools aimed to raise academic standards. "The survey shows that whilst there are many independent schools in-

involved in community-based activities, the educational links between the independent and state sector are still very much in the early stages of development," he added.

The survey of 950 fee-paying schools from the Independent Schools Council found that six out of ten allowed community use of sports, music or drama facilities but only 17 per cent let state schools use the facilities even occasionally. The figure for frequent use was just 4 per cent.

When a similar survey was carried out five years ago, facilities were usually made available free of charge. A nominal or at cost charge is now more common. Charging

for profit is rare. There were few examples of links between teachers and pupils and very few teacher exchanges.

The survey was commissioned before the general election, when Labour was questioning the charitable status of independent schools - worth around £65m.

However, before Christmas Mr Byers called a halt to hostilities between Labour and independent schools when he announced £500,000 for joint initiatives between state and private schools. A working group is examining how they should develop.

Ian Beer, former head of Harrow and the council's chairman, said partnership

and co-operation were embedded in the independent school ethos. "This is not a gift response to a new political climate. The majority of partnerships and co-operative arrangements are very well established." But much more could be done, he said.

The report points out that a small number of local authorities continue to resist co-operation between private and state schools. More than 200 fee-paying schools said proposals to share facilities had been discouraged.

Only one school reported that parents were unenthusiastic about contact with state schools because they were worried about a "rough element".

Examples of co-operation outlined at the briefing on the survey included:

■ St Michael's, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, a prep school which offers primary school pupils after-school language lessons.

■ Elton College, Berkshire which runs a summer school to help pupils from the London borough of Brent to bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level.

■ Latymer Upper/St Paul's Schools, London which have a Saturday school for primary pupils in maths, English, science and technology.



Steady at the wheel: The drugs test, being administered for the first time in the UK, left, relies on a sweat swab taken by a Drugwipe



Photographs: Hulton Getty/Simon Roberts

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Computer, Peripherals, Software, Games, Hardware, Network, Modem, Printer, Scanner, Fax, TV, Video, Audio, Music, Books, Stationery, Office Equipment, Home Appliances, Garden Equipment, Pet Supplies, Travel, Insurance, Financial Services, Legal Services, Medical Services, Education, Training, Recruitment, Staffing, Consulting, Engineering, Construction, Manufacturing, Retail, Wholesale, Distribution, Logistics, Transport, Shipping, Customs, Immigration, Visa, Passport, Travel Agency, Tour Operator, Hotel, Restaurant, Bar, Club, Casino, Gambling, Lottery, Betting, Insurance, Financial Services, Legal Services, Medical Services, Education, Training, Recruitment, Staffing, Consulting, Engineering, Construction, Manufacturing, Retail, Wholesale, Distribution, Logistics, Transport, Shipping, Customs, Immigration, Visa, Passport, Travel Agency, Tour Operator, Hotel, Restaurant, Bar, Club, Casino, Gambling, Lottery, Betting, Insurance, Financial Services, Legal Services, Medical Services, 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Star acts to call last orders on theatre plan



Young stager: Timothy James, nine, at the Waterside Theatre in Stratford. He wrote to the council and spoke in a meeting opposing plans to turn the theatre into a pub. Photograph: NTI

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

The actress Susannah York yesterday gave an impassioned performance, speaking out to save a small community theatre from being turned into a pub.

The award-winning actress travelled from London to Stratford-upon-Avon to address a public inquiry into the future of the tiny Waterside Theatre.

The venue, a stone's throw from the Royal Shakespeare Company's three theatres, closed last year, and campaigners, including the district council, are fighting to stop plans by brewery chain J D Weatherspoon to turn it into a restaurant and bar.

She told the packed council chamber: "Once a theatre is

gone, no matter how large or small, it is another brick removed from the foundations of our culture.

"Actors love their pubs as much as do any in the land - we probably love our theatres better - but a city-centre pub, on that corner, overlooking the river, does Stratford really need it? This much-loved theatre will be big in its uses, hosting concerts and conferences, and continuing to be a centre of excellence in education and a training ground for young people in all the performing arts."

She addressed the female government planning inspector directly asking: "Madam inspector, would you rather see your children or young relatives spend their free time in a pub, or would you rather they be-

came involved in a youth drama, music, dance or art group?"

"As we approach the millennium we are all busy reflecting on society's progress. What are we going to bequeath to the children of Stratford and their far-flung contemporaries?"

"A cultural wasteland or another small jewel in this town's crown? Another pub or a cultural amenity which could change and enhance their lives?"

She urged the inspector to rule in favour of the district council in saving the theatre from "extinction" and said she hoped it would become a "further beacon of theatrical activity" in the town.

She criticised the Government for its lack of support for

the arts saying: "I feel passionate about the future of the theatre in this country, and about this government - so fervent in opposition - and its failure to support the arts."

The actress, who sat down to rapturous applause, became involved with the campaign last year when she performed at the nearby Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

The inquiry was set up after Weatherspoon's lodged an appeal when the council blocked its application for permission to change the theatre.

Council planning officers had recommended granting permission, but the committee rejected it because it regarded the theatre as an important part of Stratford's cultural heritage that should be maintained.



Leading lights: Ffion Jenkins (left) and Dame Diana Rigg, of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts

Campaign coup as business gives its backing

The Independent and Independent on Sunday campaign to stop the crisis in the arts by giving tax relief to people donating money to theatres, galleries, museums and orchestras, has won another victory, gaining the support of the country's leading businesses.

The Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (Absa), which represents 300 businesses including companies such as BT and BP, is supporting our campaign. Absa's director-general Colio Tweedy said yesterday:

The association, whose director of operations is Ffion Jenkins - recently married to the leader of the Opposition, William Hague - pumps luminaries in both business and

THE INDEPENDENT

Save
the
Arts

the arts on its ruling council. These include businessmen such as Sir Peter Davis and Sir Nicholas Goodison and leading figures in the arts such as Dame Diana Rigg and Lord Putnam.

Absa yesterday published its own tax guide for its members, prepared in association

with Arthur Andersen, the accountancy firm. Absa chairman Robin Wight, who heads the WCRF advertising agency, has sent a copy to Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, with a letter that says the Government should look at ways of simplifying the treatment of sponsors and donors in line with the United States model.

Mr Wight says: "Our tax guide is 60 pages long. Surely it should only be three pages."

And Mr Tweedy added yesterday: "Arts supporters should be left with a warm feeling and not an accounting nightmare."

The Independent and Independent on Sunday campaign is urging the Chancellor to simplify the tax system for those giving to the arts and make all

donations tax deductible in his Budget on 17 March. This would massively increase the amount of money individuals give to the arts, and help end the financial crisis that cultural institutions are facing.

Already this week the campaign has attracted the significant support of the Secretary of State for Culture, Chris Smith. Many leading arts figures including Sir Peter Hall, Sir Cameron Mackintosh, Fiona Shaw and Ian Holm have also given their support.

We are urging Mr Brown to use his Budget to introduce a change in taxation law to enable people to make tax-free donations to arts companies and venues.

A simple system could be brought in to replace the muddled and cumbersome system of tax relief through covenants and the Gift Aid Scheme.

The system is riddled with anomalies. Some arts organisations are charities, others are not. Tax relief can only be claimed where the organisation is a charity. In addition, tax relief can only be claimed on donations above £250, a deterrent to many who would like to help the arts.

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MPs in Murdoch challenge

By Anthony Bevis

THE LIBERAL Democrats last night leaked the outline of a high-level Labour Party discussion, attended by Tony Blair, agreeing that "representations" should be made to ministers about predatory pricing in the newspaper industry.

A minute of last week's meeting of Labour's Parliamentary Committee - the key contact point between the leadership and backbench MPs - said they had discussed the Companies Bill and Lord McNally's all-party amendment on predatory pricing, on which the Government roundly defeated last Monday.

The meeting was chaired by Clive Soley, Parliamentary Labour Party chairman, who told *The Independent* on Tuesday that he favoured a compromise under which action could be taken against any business which cut its price below cost for more than a fixed period.

The pricing issue was raised during Prime Minister's question time yesterday by Paddy Ashdown. The Liberal Democrat leader said the Government appeared to be arguing "that when it comes to competition, dealing with newspapers is the same as dealing with tins of beans, when it manifestly isn't. A vibrant media is vital to a healthy democracy."

Steel's lobbying broke rules

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

THE FORMER Liberal Leader Lord Steel broke Parliamentary rules when he supported a pro-hunting group without declaring an interest, Sir Gordon Downey ruled yesterday.

Lord Steel, then Sir David Steel, tabled an amendment in October 1996 to a Commons motion which criticised the Countryside Movement. At the time, he was paid £93,000 a year for one day's work each week as chairman of the movement, as revealed by the *Independent* on Sunday last Autumn.

Five months later he tabled a further three motions in support of the movement, again without declaring an interest. Although it had stopped paying him by then he apologised to the House for the omission, according to Sir Gordon's report.

However, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards rejected "on balance" a further complaint from the Labour MP Dale Campbell-Savours that Sir David broke advocacy rules by tabling the amendment. He also ruled out allegations that Sir David's actions had breached rules on advocacy and on the registering of employment agreements.



Lord Steel: 'No dishonour'

If Lord Steel had not retired as an MP at last year's general election he would have been required to amend his omissions, a report yesterday from the Committee of Standards and Privileges said.

Last night, Lord Steel was in France on business, but a statement released by the Liberal Democrat MP Charles Kennedy with his agreement said the report "puts in some context the more lurid headlines" on the matter.

"David's relationship with the Countryside Movement was a public matter of fact from the outset. That is the reality. There is no question in my mind of any dishonourable conduct whatsoever," Mr Kennedy said. Mr Campbell-Savours said that if it had been clear in 1996

that the foxhunting lobby was paying a prominent liberal, it would have become an election issue. It was "particularly objectionable" that one of the motions had attacked a £1m donation to Labour from the International Fund for Animal Welfare, he added.

"We now need a total review by the Standards and Privileges Committee of the operation of employment agreements. They are being abused and the Nolan reforms were intended to cut out this kind of abuse," he said.

Lord Steel confirmed to the committee that he had no objection to the inquiry and had no wish to seek the "protection" as a member of the Lords.

He did, however, take exception to the fact that Mr Campbell-Savours' complaint had been made and released to the press without the courtesy of prior notice.

The chairman of the committee, Robert Sheldon, said that even if Lord Steel had still been an MP it was unlikely he would have faced suspension. However, some penalties would probably have been discussed.

"We note that he has apologised and we hope that this will explain the way in which this committee responds to failures of this kind."

Blair looks toward new deal for jobless



Job advertisement: Tony Blair at yesterday's launch of the £8m campaign Photograph Reuters

THE PRIME Minister yesterday launched an £8m advertising campaign to promote the Government's flagship New Deal for unemployed young people amid jibes that the potential "client group" was fast disappearing, writes Barrie Clement, Labour Editor.

Tony Blair's clarion call to the business community to support the initiative came as unemployment figures showed that the number of jobless 18 to 24-year-olds stood at 118,000 compared with the Government's original target in 1995 of 250,000.

David Willets, Tory employment spokesman, said the number of young people out of work was falling towards 100,000.

"The Government is pressing on with its expensive £8m advertising campaign for the New Deal when, in many parts of the country, employers will now have difficulty finding young people who have been unemployed for more than six months."

Andrew Smith, the employment minister, argued, however, that unemployment remained high by historical standards.

Mr Blair said: "This is nothing less than a crusade and one that brings together government, business and people in a common purpose because unemployment has wrecked the lives of too many young people for too long."

PM against privacy law 'by any method'

By Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

TONY BLAIR opposes a privacy law, by legislation, or "backdoor" application of the European Convention of Human Rights through the courts, his spokesman said last night.

In the Commons, William Hague, the Tory leader, asked for an assurance about the consequences of the Human Rights Bill, due for its second reading in the Commons on Monday. "Can you confirm," Mr Hague asked, "that the Government will consider amending the Bill to make sure there is no risk of a backdoor privacy law coming into force through the Human Rights Bill?"

Mr Blair said: "We have already confirmed we are listening to those representations... being made to us. We con-

firmed that a long time ago," Mr Hague's questioning was prompted by an interview with Lord Irvine, Lord Chancellor, in the *New Statesman*, in which he suggested the Press Complaints Commission should take "prior restraint" powers to curb exposés like the *News of the World* report on the relationship between Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, and his diary secretary, Gaynor Regan.

Lord Irvine wants the independent Press Complaints Commission to complement the Human Rights Bill with new procedures to impose fines of up to £10,000 on papers that breach its privacy guidelines.

In the Commons Mr Hague asked for assurance that there would be no "backdoor" privacy law imposed by judge-made interpretation of the European Convention, and Mr Blair said:

"It is not the case that it will lead to a privacy law. The European Convention on Human Rights is a measure that allows us to claim in this country what otherwise we would have to claim in Europe."

But the Prime Minister's spokesman said later that unless voluntary agreement could be reached with the newspapers strengthening the system of press self-regulation, they could end up with a privacy law imposed on them by the courts.

He said the Prime Minister, Lord Irvine, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, and Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, had discussed the issues involved earlier this week. "We don't want a privacy law, front-door or backdoor," he said. "We are trying to ensure that we do not end up with a privacy law."

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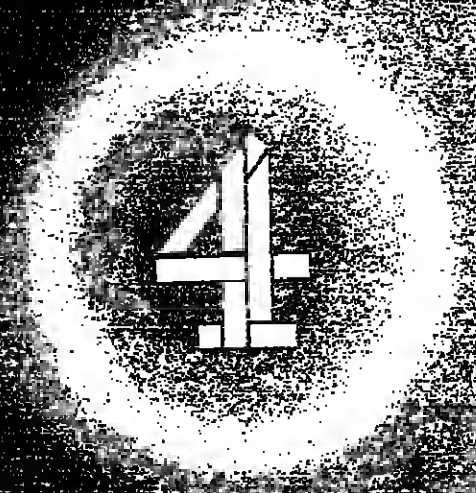
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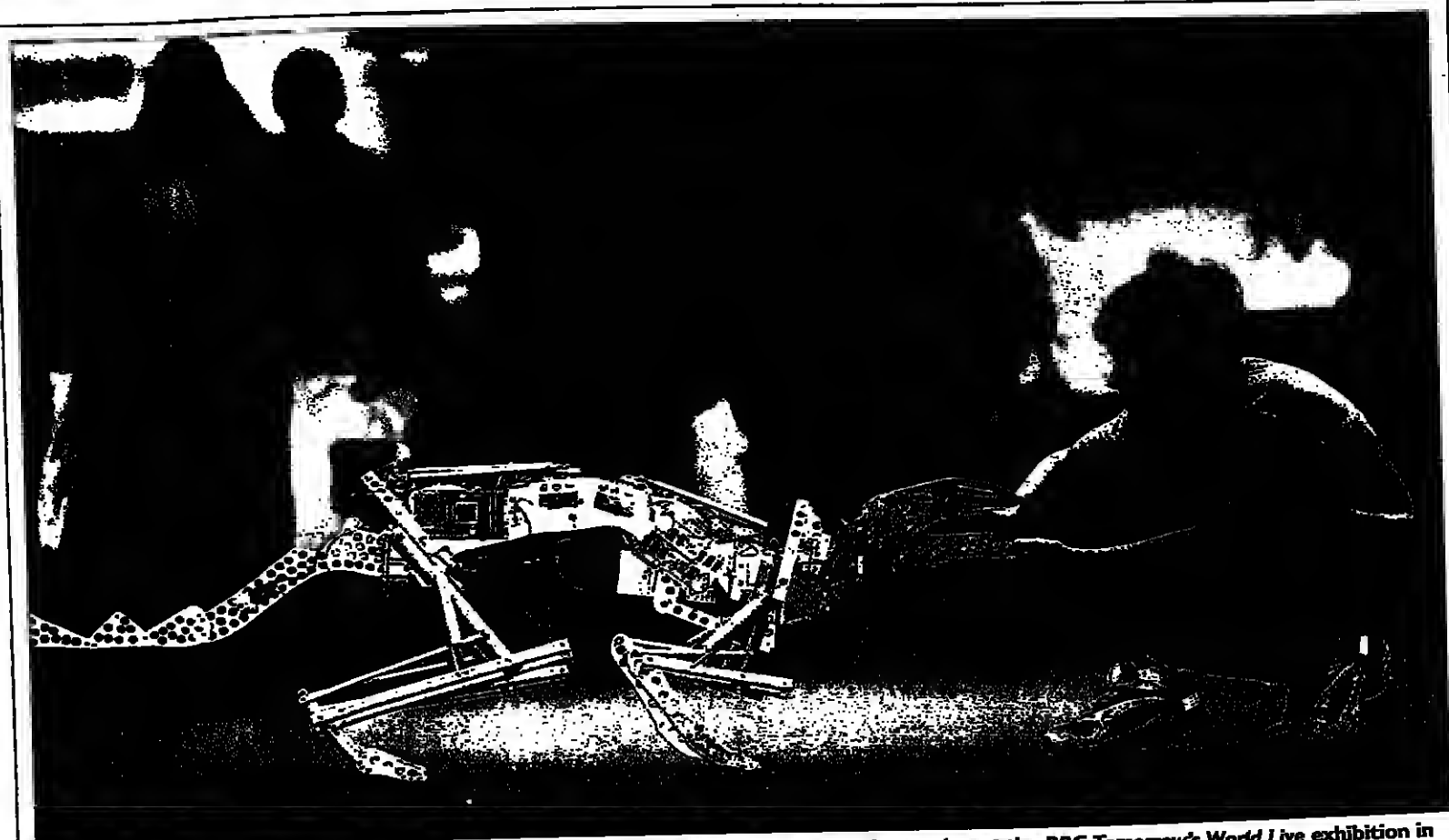
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Cyber-saurus: Liam Gigg, 11, of Brindley Heath School, getting to grips with a robot iguanodon at the BBC Tomorrow's World Live exhibition in the NEC, Birmingham, yesterday; the software-controlled 'lizard' is built to move and interact freely with people
Photograph: Steve Hill

Nerve damage shows RSI is not all in the mind

By Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

THE DISABLING condition known as repetitive strain injury (RSI) is not all in the mind but may be caused by sensory damage to the nerves in the hand, researchers say.

A study comparing office workers with patients suffering from RSI found measurable differences in their response to vibration which worsened among the patients after five minutes of typing. The findings, the first to demonstrate that RSI is a medical condition with a physiological basis, could lead to the development of a test for the condition.

Scepticism about the true ba-

sis of RSI, which affects thousands of employees and has left many unable to work, has made it difficult for sufferers to gain support or win compensation. Although the condition is associated with long hours spent working at computer keyboards, it affects a range of industrial workers who perform repetitive movements, from chicken pluckers to toilet-roll manufacturers.

The research, conducted at University College, London, and published in the *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, used "vibrometer" tests on keyboard and non-keyboard users and found that RSI sufferers had reduced vibration sensitivity in the area of the hand supplied by the median and ulnar nerves. They felt normal pressure in this area as pain, indicating nerve damage. The study, funded by the medical charity Action Research, was conducted on 29 office workers, 17 patients with RSI and 27 controls who did not use computer keyboards regularly.

The Trades Union Congress, which claims that 100,000 keyboard workers and a similar number in other jobs suffer RSI, said the finding would help the worst affected win compensation. John Monks, TUC general secretary, said: "Tens of thousands

of sufferers can take some comfort today from this evidence proving their pain is real - the product of intensive computer use. The dangers of computer over-use should now be clear to employers and their insurers and they must take urgent steps to ensure that the work they are giving their staff is safe."

The finance union BIFU, which is awaiting the outcome of five test cases involving Midland Bank employees who worked on in-putting cheque and other information to computers to strict time limits, called for RSI to be a recognised industrial injury which would allow sufferers to qualify automatically for industrial injury disablement benefit.

Tom Jones, a personal injury lawyer with the London law firm, Thompsons, which handles several hundred RSI claims a year, said compensation was easier to win in cases of "physical" RSI where there were clear physical symptoms - "lumps and bumps". "Diffuse" RSI, where there were no physical signs, was much harder to prove.

"This study suggests it is possible to prove injury in diffuse RSI. It is the first step on the ladder to giving some credence to those people who claim their injuries are caused by their work."

'My injuries finished my chances of work'

ONE OF the most celebrated recent victories for an RSI sufferer was that of Anne Packer, who won £70,000 from her employer just before Christmas, writes Jeremy Laurance.

Mrs Packer, 55, was a senior supplies assistant with the North East Thames Regional Health Authority who was medically retired two years ago with a disabling shoulder, arm and hand injuries.

She had worked for the authority without problems for 10 years until her office was relocated. She found herself the only employee with computer skills and worked in cramped conditions for up to eight hours a day at the keyboard.

She began suffering pain in her hands and arms and started taking painkillers. She lost the power of grip in her hands which made it difficult for her to hold a car steering wheel.

She said: "My injuries finished me on the job market. I cannot hold a pen to write and I certainly cannot operate any kind of keyboard. I find it difficult to dress or do up zips. My husband has to prepare the vegetables for meals."

In a similar case in 1994,



Anne Packer: Cannot hold a pen or do up zips

Kathleen Harris, 47, won £79,000 after being forced to give up her job with the Inland Revenue. Ms Harris, of west London, developed pains in her right arm in 1990 while working on an electric typewriter for seven hours a day.

She was forced to retire in July 1993 and is now registered as disabled, unable to do household chores such as ironing.

At the announcement of the out of court settlement in January 1994, Ms Harris told a press conference: "I hope this will help other people in my position."

DAILY POEM

i like my body when it is with your

By e.e. cummings

i like my body when it is with your
body. It is so quite new a thing.
Muscles better and nerves more.
i like your body, i like what it does,
i like its hows. i like to feel the spine
of your body and its bones, and the trembling
firm-smooth ness and which i will
again and again and again
kiss, i like kissing this and that of you,
i like, slowly stroking the, shocking fuzz
of your electric fur, and what-is-it comes
over parting flesh ... And eyes big love-crums.

and possibly i like the thrill

of under me you so quite new

The Daily Poems for this pre-Valentine's Day week come from *The Book of Love*, an 800-page anthology of prose and poetry from many different periods and cultures, edited by Diane Ackerman and Jeanne Mackin (W W Norton, £22.50).

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Luck prevented 'Sea Empress' devastation

By Tony Heath

THE 'SEA EMPRESS' oil tanker disaster cost between £50m and £100m in environmental damage and would have destroyed more wildlife if the wind had been blowing in the opposite direction, it was claimed yesterday.

The tanker ran aground at the entrance to Milford Haven two years ago this Sunday when the wind was blowing off-shore - a rare phenomenon on the west Wales coast - and the tourist season was still a couple of months away.

Even so, some 72,000 tonnes

of oil spilled from the stricken vessel polluting 125 miles of coast, much of it inside the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, and dealing a hammer blow to an economy based on tourism as well as on oil refining.

Speaking in Cardiff at the start of a three-day conference called to discuss a government-backed report *The Environmental Impact of the Sea Empress Oil Spill*, Professor Ron Edwards who chaired a lengthy investigation, said: "Had the tanker grounded later in the year when beaches would have been thronged with visitors and had the wind been blowing on-shore

as normal - it could have been much worse."

The report is based on almost 100 separate investigations and cost £2m. Damage to the environment is estimated at between £50m and £100m, with losses to the tourist trade ranging from an optimistic £1.5m to a numbing £40m, with extra health costs put at £17m. Losses to the fishing industry have yet to be fully quantified.

Professor Edwards denied that the 260-page document pulled punches. "It is not a whitewash as some have claimed. I won't have whitewash in any report I make," he de-



Costly error: Slick cost at least £50m. Photograph: Rob Scrutton

clared. Conservationists pointed out later that little appeared to have changed since the *Braer* ran aground off the Shetlands in January 1993. Joan Edwards, marine conservation officer of the Wildlife Trusts, the umbrella body of 47 trusts claimed that the

key recommendations in the report into the *Braer* accident had not been implemented. "We are still waiting for areas at risk to be identified so that measures can be put in place to handle future problems," she said.

The report urges the establishment of what it calls "a national contingency plan for environmental assessment" to enable experts to step in promptly. "The early weeks are critical and measures must be in place so that action is taken swiftly," Professor Edwards said.

He reinforced appeals to ensure that the "polluter pays" principle is followed to the let-

ter. "A lot of damage is caused to society itself and that cost should be included as well as more high profile costs."

The clean-up in west Wales was hampered by a lack of local sites to receive the thousands of tonnes of oil removed from the coastline. Some had to be driven 100 miles for disposal at Merthyr Tydfil.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is urged to review the training of volunteer bird cleansers in the light of evidence suggesting that many oiled birds returned to the wild died later.

Local MP Nick Ainger later

expressed dismay at the Government's decision not to have a powerful tug permanently on station to cover Milford Haven. "Year-round cover should if necessary be funded by a levy on shipping and oil interests - that was one of Lord Donaldson's recommendations when he enquired into the *Braer* disaster."

Ron Davies, the Secretary of State for Wales, said: "The Government will be considering the report carefully over the coming months."

■ *The Environmental Impact of the Sea Empress Oil Spill*. Available at Stationery Office bookshops. Price £19.00

Industrialists come to the aid of unions

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

TONY BLAIR's plan to water down the Government's commitment to workers' rights will be critically undermined today when the non-partisan, highly respected Industrial Society comes down in favour of the unions.

The society, funded by both sides of industry, will warn against Mr Blair's strategy of erecting substantial barriers in the way of union recognition - a position endorsed by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch.

The statement from the society is due to be issued today as a group of Labour MPs meet Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, to express concern over signs that Mr Blair may be bowing to the demands of Mr Murdoch and other employers.

In particular, the society is concerned about the Prime Minister's interpretation of a clause in the manifesto which says that union recognition should be granted where a ballot of "the relevant workforce" produces a majority.

Mr Blair is understood to favour an argument advanced by the Confederation of British Industry which would insist that

recognition could only be granted if a majority of the entire workforce eligible to vote supported it, rather than a simple majority of those voting.

John Knell, head of research at the Industrial Society, acknowledged yesterday there had been considerable debate on the issue, but "the argument that a ballot would be deemed successful if a simple majority of votes are cast in favour, remains compelling, particularly if balanced with a meaningful participation threshold".

The society is understood to be unhappy with a "fallback" position being floated by Labour sources, which would set a threshold for participation in a ballot as high as 80 or 90 per cent.

The Industrial Society's intervention comes after a letter to Labour MPs from the Trades Union Congress which told them that if they had stood for election under the CBI system, all but 14 would never have reached the Commons.

The society is less supportive of the union line on how the voting "constituencies" should be drawn up. Mr Knell points out that this is a crucial issue in determining how the law will operate. He says that the "more straightforward and workable the

definition the better". The society is understood to favour the CBI position on this issue, which means employers will be able to decide the boundaries based on company structures. The TUC position is thought to be too complicated. Unions fear that companies will "gerrymander" the constituencies to minimise the likelihood of recognition.

Union leaders are due to meet Mrs Beckett early next week to urge her to honour the manifesto on union recognition. It is thought that they will be pushing at an open door. The real difficulty will be to persuade Mr Blair.

A White Paper on employees' rights, which will contain recognition proposals, was due last autumn, postponed until this month, and since delayed until March or April.

Mr Murdoch's position was made clear yesterday in a *Times* leader arguing that "easy union recognition could bring back the bad old days". He fears that the GPMU print union could win representation rights at his Wapping plant. His newspaper titles were transferred to the complex in east London in 1986 after 5,000 employees were dismissed for going on strike.



Colour the streets: Linda Cierach's spring/summer 1998 couture collection being modelled by Rita de Almeida (left) and Catherine Fullerton. Batten in front of the designer's studio in south-west London yesterday. Photograph: Rul Xavier

Nineties young are playing the field

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

ADOLESCENTS in the Nineties spend more than twice as long playing the field in their search for a mate as they did 40 years ago. Young people are having sex earlier - on average at 17, compared with 20

for men and 21 for women in the Fifties - but the age at which they settle down with a partner or get married is unchanged - 22 for women and 24 for men. The widening interval between first intercourse and first birth, now averaging 12 years for men and seven years for women, has "profound implications" for

the sexual health of the nation (for sexually transmitted diseases and for contraception), Kaye Wellings, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said at a seminar organised by the Family Planning Association and the Health Education Authority.

Ms Wellings, co-author of the

national survey of sexual attitudes, published in 1994, said a new analysis of the findings had revealed the changes.

The figures also show the disappearance of the virgin bride. In the Fifties, 40 per cent of women married before they had sex compared with less than 1 per cent in the Nineties.

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Lost Tibetan text exposes Chinese brutality

By Teresa Poole in Peking

A SEARING criticism of the death, destruction and famine wrought by the Chinese in Tibet after the Dalai Lama fled in 1959 is published today. It will be the first time the document has been seen by anyone outside the top leadership in Peking.

The 70,000 Character Petition, the most important text in modern Tibetan history, was written in 1962 by the 10th Panchen Lama, the second-highest spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists. It is the most heartfelt and trenchant attack ever known to have been made by an insider of Chairman Mao's disastrous policies.

The 10th Panchen Lama wrote the 123-page petition after investigating China's brutal suppression of the 1959 Tibet rebellion and the impact of the agricultural upheaval of the so-called Great Leap Forward on parts of Tibet. It details:

- How the number of monasteries in the Tibet Autonomous Region, as Tibet was renamed in Communist China, had dropped from 2,500 to 70 by 1961, and the number of monks and nuns was reduced by 93 per cent. Outsiders sometimes mistakenly think that this scale of devastation did not occur until the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution;

- How terrible famine and random persecution resulted in "an evident and severe reduction" in the population of Tibetans in surrounding provinces of China, such as Qinghai and Gansu;

- That during the so-called "Democratic Reform" which was imposed on Tibet after the 1959 uprising, Tibetans were persecuted indiscriminately and very violently, "falling down unconscious ... their limbs being broken ... [and] some who lost their lives during the struggle". Suicide was a common resort with people "throwing themselves into rivers or using weapons to kill themselves";

- That "the number of prisoners in the whole of Tibet reached a percentage of the total population which has never been surpassed throughout history", with many prisoners dying of "abnormal" causes;

- How in Tibet, the authorities "lined up monks on one side and nuns and secular women on the other side, and forced them to select someone from the other side" as a marriage partner;

The Panchen, who was only 24 at the time, submitted his petition to the Chinese prime minister, Zhou Enlai, in the summer of 1962. When he was gathering his material, voicing even the slightest disquiet about Mao's



Exile: The Dalai Lama with his guards after fleeing in 1959. The Panchen Lama's Petition exposes China's brutality in Tibet at this time Photograph: Popperfoto

policies was political suicide. But in the petition, the Panchen Lama states bluntly: "In the past, although Tibet was a society ruled by dark and savage feudalism, there had never been such a shortage of grain."

Two years later he was jailed. He was not released from prison and house arrest until 1978. He died in 1989 in suspicious circumstances. Few copies of the petition ever existed, but one found its way to the London-based Tibet Information Network, which has now published it.

Over the years, the 10th Panchen Lama was accused of being a Chinese puppet, nurtured by Peking as an opponent of the exiled Dalai Lama. Publication of the Petition

should lay that argument to rest. Professor Dawa Norbu, a Tibet specialist at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi, said: "It is clear from this document that the Panchen Lama should be considered the first Tibetan human rights activist in modern Tibetan history."

Well-schooled by the Chinese, the Panchen Lama knew how best to present such a risky document. Page after page hails the "radiant illumination" of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, but this political correctness also gives way to a savage description of the reality of life and death in Tibet, and the attempted extermination of Tibet's religion, culture and language.

Under the auspices of Chinese officials, "they burned countless statues of the Buddha. Buddhist scriptures and stupas, threw them into water ... broke them and melted them". They insulted religion by "using pictures of the Buddha and Buddhist sutras to make shoes" and did things "which even lunatics would hardly do". Some villages and monasteries "looked as if they had been accidentally destroyed by bombardment and a war had just ended, and they were unbearable to look at".

The final death toll in 1959-61, through famine, execution, ill-treatment of prisoners, and "struggle" sessions, is not known to this day. "Many people, principally the

young and old, died of starvation." In Qinghai, after the system of communal agriculture was imposed, each person had only 5kg of grain a month, "so dogs of fat, grain husks and so on which formerly in Tibet were fodder for horses and donkeys, hulls and oxen, became hard to get and were considered nourishing and fragrant foods". In some places there were "whole families dying out".

The Panchen Lama feared that as the "wind of destruction blew up", Tibetan culture and religion would be wiped out. The Chinese cadres, he complained, "thought everything old was backward, filthy and useless". "We must ensure that Tibetans do not change into another nationality".

INNOCENTS AT THE MERCY OF PEKING

THE POLITICAL legacy of the late 10th Panchen Lama is now secure with the publication of his 70,000 Character Petition. But his spiritual legacy is a tragedy, which is still unfolding, writes Teresa Poole.

Since 1995, two young Tibetan boys have been virtual prisoners of the Chinese in Peking, innocents caught up in a political dispute over which boy is the true reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama. One, Gendun Choekyi Nyima, was named in May 1995 by the exiled Dalai Lama as the new Panchen. Then aged six, Gendun and his parents have not been seen since, after the enraged Chinese authorities spirited them away into "protective" custody.

A second boy, Gyaincan Norbu, was produced by the Chinese in November 1995 as the "real" Panchen.

His future is little more enigmatic; he is being trained under close official scrutiny and is wheeled out for photo-opportunities to demonstrate his young spiritual wisdom. Gyaincan Norbu is now about nine.

too young to realise that the majority of Tibetans consider him a Chinese fake.

With this start in life, the lives of both these potential Panchens look destined to be as tortured as that of the late Panchen, described as the "tragic hero" of occupied Tibet by the Tibetologist Professor Dawa Norbu.

The 10th Panchen was born in 1938, and his candidature for Panchen was supported by Peking. He tried to walk a tightrope between his Tibetan loyalties and the need to accommodate the Chinese. But the Panchen Lama's carefully-worded 1962 Petition led to party criticism and almost 14 years in jail or house arrest.

On his release, he again spoke up about the Tibetan people and culture, repeating many of his accusations in a 1987 speech. He died suddenly on 28 January 1989, purportedly of a heart attack. But the fact that his parents and tutor were in hospital within days of his death prompted rumours that he had been poisoned.



Tragic hero: Late 10th Panchen

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Boutros-Ghali condemns US role over Iraq

The former UN chief tells Robert Fisk in Paris that he fears the worst as the allies prepare for yet more bombing

Boutros Boutros-Ghali looked at us with something between world-weariness and despair, his old hound-dog face registering astonishment at the West's folly in the Middle East. "What is certain in any kind of strike against Iraq is that it will reinforce the position of the fundamentalists," he said. "There is no doubt about this. Fundamentalism is a basic anti-Western attitude. So here again, the Westerners are preparing to bomb an Arab country—and it is the Iraqi people who will be killed."

Vain, arrogant, haughty; the descriptions of the former United Nations secretary-general and Egyptian ex-foreign minister have made Mr Boutros-Ghali as famous as his old job. Vanity there is but in Paris yesterday, it was weighed down with a sense of cynicism and fear. It was he, after all, who ran the UN in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War when thousands—perhaps a million—Iraqi civilians died under UN sanctions, originally imposed when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

"I cannot say I am against sanctions, no—because sanctions exist in the UN Charter, and I was a member of the UN Cabinet in 1990. We had had an invasion of a member country [Kuwait]. It was an 'Anschluss'."

It was obvious, however, that Mr Boutros-Ghali's scorn was reserved for a UN Security Council which allowed the Americans to use its resolutions in any way they saw fit. "What nobody mentions today is what

happened in August 1996," he said. "The Americans bombed Iraq when their Kurdish operation collapsed. Why? Because it was August? No, the American point of view was exactly the same as it is going to be today: that their interpretation [of staging air strikes] was according to the terms of the UN resolutions [on non-compliance with arms destruction]. But what are the points of view of the other members of the Security Council? Why cannot 15 member states give their own interpretation—after all, they participated in the adoption of these resolutions."

He continued: "I am astonished that with the exception of just one newspaper, nobody today has mentioned the principal actors who are suffering—the Iraqi people. And the UN, remember, was an institution created to protect the people." Of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright—the nemesis which destroyed Mr Boutros-Ghali's hopes of a further term as UN Secretary General—there was studied discretion. "Gentlemen don't talk," Mr Boutros-Ghali muttered. But this did not apply to the United States.

"You have had a drastic change in American public opinion in the last three years. They were looking at the UN in 1992 as the new super-organisation that will manage the world. Mrs Albright was talking about 'active multi-lateralism'. Then suddenly you have a fun-

damental change. It followed the accident [sic] of Somalia."

If America lost its trust in Mr Boutros-Ghali's UN when his dead soldiers were dragged naked through the streets of an African city, why has the UN nevertheless imposed sanctions against America's enemies rather than its friends? Mr Boutros-Ghali wished us to understand what happened when UN Secretary Generals tried to implement UN resolutions against Israel.

"After the Israelis put hundreds of [Palestinian] religious leaders [sic] on a Lebanese mountain in the early 1990s, they were ordered by the UN to take them back. I sent a report to the Security Council, saying that Israel had not complied with the Security Council. One week later began the attacks on me, saying I was arrogant, that I was a bad manager, that there were scandals in the UN's financial administration."

We should have no illusions. Mr Boutros-Ghali insisted. "The UN will act according to pressure from the major actors. Why was resolution 242 [calling for Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land] never implemented? And why are resolutions concerning Libya and Iraq always implemented? Because the UN is a political body; it's not a kind of tribunal. It is not a council of wise men trying to solve problems according to equity or natural law. It's a purely political order."

Comment, page 21



Time off: Prince Charles break yesterday in the Bhutan Himalayas 8,500ft above the Paro Valley as his party trekked towards the Tiger's Nest—the 17th-century Tak Tsang monastery, where Tantric Buddhism was introduced to the kingdom. Royal albums, pages 18, 19 Photograph: John Sullivan

Lewinsky 'spent 40 minutes alone with Clinton'

By David Osborne
in Washington

The White House sex scandal took on an ominous new spin yesterday after a former secret service officer claimed he saw Monica Lewinsky, the former intern, spend at least 40 minutes alone with President Clinton in the Oval Office.

While there have been reports of unnamed sources witnessing the two alone together in the White House, Lewis Fox is the first to come forward and make the claim in person. He spoke first to the *Washington Post*.

Mr Clinton has been engulfed in allegations that he had sexual relations with Ms Lewinsky, who is now 24, and that he told her to lie about them since the scandal first broke on 21 January.

The assertions of Mr Fox, who retired early last year, could be important because the President is widely believed to have stated in a deposition he gave in the parallel Paula Jones sexual harassment case that he had never spent time alone with Ms Lewinsky.

Hillary Clinton, meanwhile, made a fresh attempt yesterday

to blunt the scandal. Talking to reporters, she suggested that the entire imbroglio would eventually start to fade. "I don't anticipate that this will evaporate. But I anticipate it will slowly dissipate over time under the weight of its own insubstantiality," she said.

An appearance by Ms Lewinsky in front of the grand jury empanelled by the special prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, which had been set for today has been postponed at least until next Tuesday. There was speculation that a deal could be struck before then between Mr

Starr and Ms Lewinsky's lawyers that would give her immunity from criminal prosecution.

Ms Lewinsky's mother, however, Marcia Lewis, began a second day of testimony before the grand jury in Washington yesterday. Daughter and mother lived together at the Watergate apartment complex in Washington at the time that the alleged liaisons with the President took place.

In his remarks, Mr Fox said he remembered Ms Lewinsky arriving at the White House one weekend day in late 1995 with an armful of official papers

and asking to see the President. He said that he showed her in and that they were alone together. He had not seen her leave when he left his post after 40 minutes.

Mrs Clinton refused to address Mr Fox's claims. James Carville, an old trouble-shooting supporter of the President, told one interviewer: "Why would the *Washington Post* report that, when they know full well that there are four doors into the Oval office? Why didn't they choose to report that anyone can walk in any door, none of them are locked?"

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In 1994 at the age of 31, I suffered a heart attack (something that I believe is happening more and more to younger people). I was not, regrettably, covered for such an eventuality, being so young.

Being self-employed, I had to get back to work asap. I had a mortgage at mid-term, a wife and two young children to support. What I received from the state was a pittance. I was compelled to return to work much earlier than we would have liked. Without realising it, I was pitching myself into a downward spiral that would further affect my health. When I returned to work, I found that just to survive I now had to work longer and harder to cover the debt I'd accumulated during the period of illness. This, I'm afraid, had the eventual effect in May 1997 of a second attack. I've now got over this



second setback and again have returned somewhat prematurely to work. With the overall accumulated debt, we were staring ultimate ruin in the face if I had not done this. Since going back to work, after being back for only one month, I have been signed off sick again with angina (chest pains).

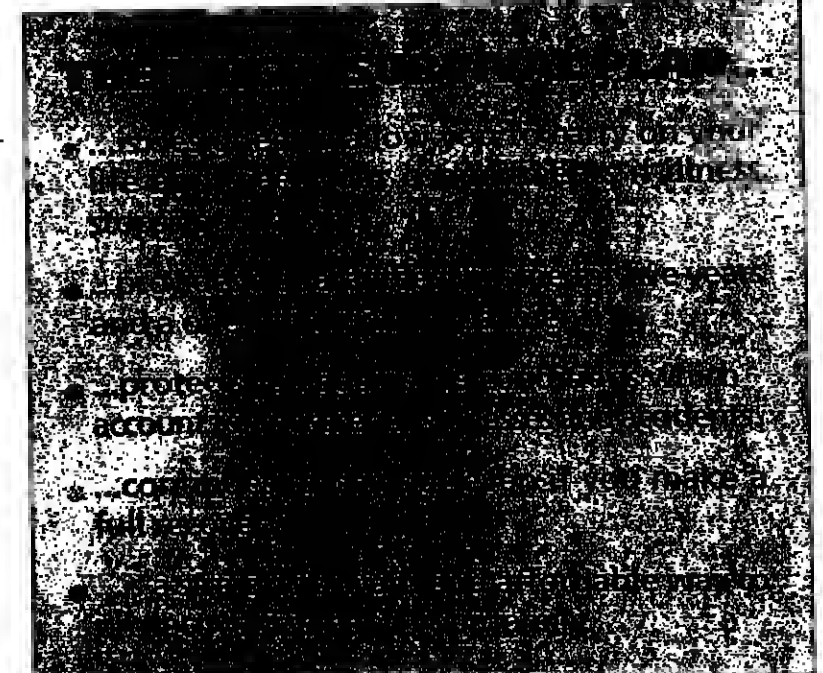
I can not stress strongly enough how important it is, specially for younger people with mortgages and families, to get this cover, as I feel that with the same hindsight, and five years to get back on my feet, I would without doubt not be in the position that I find myself in today.

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Yours sincerely,

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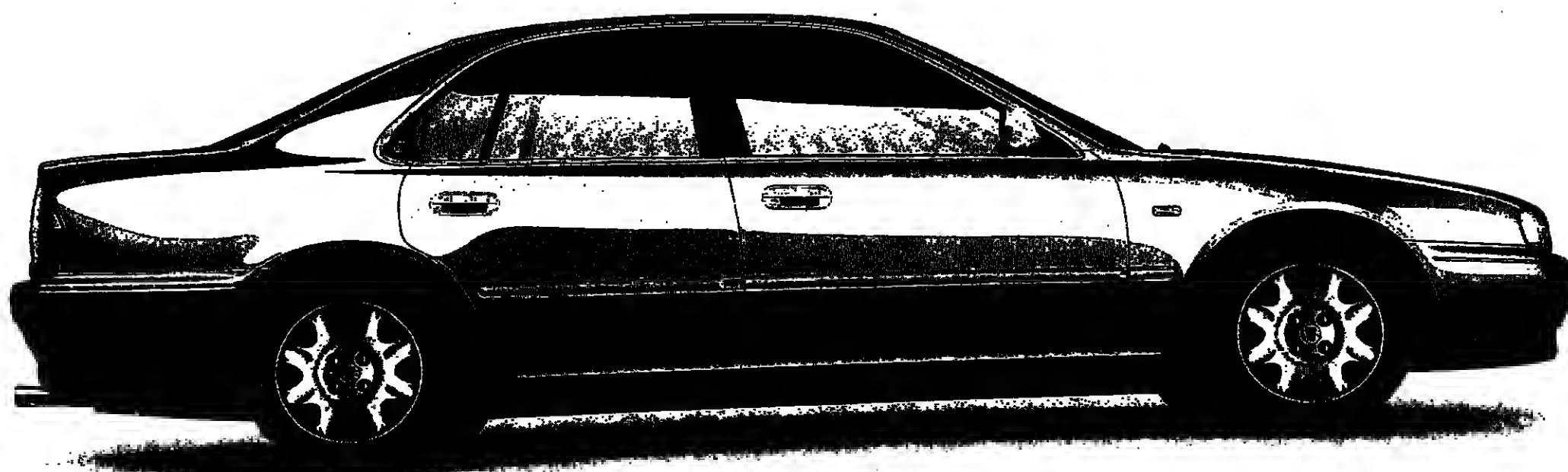
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South Africa's new underclass: poor whites

By Mary Braid in Cape Town

KITTY VAN ZYL throws another batch of homemade sausage fritters in the frying pan. Nearing the end of another night's cook-in for hundreds of neighbourhood children and adults, she complains bitterly in her native Afrikaans about indifference to human misery.

"I asked the local Kentucky Fried Chicken for its leftovers," says Mrs Van Zyl, 42, saviour of Sanddrift East, a dust-bowl Cape Town housing scheme. "But the manager said he would rather give them to the local black squatter camp." In the new South Africa, few have been more devastated by change than the growing army of poor whites. In the old days of apartheid the weakest and least educated whites were cushioned by the National Party; Afrikaners were particularly favoured.

State-owned industries like the railways and post office operated like job-creation schemes. Today, though rich whites moan about transformation, their lives have hardly altered. But those at the bottom of the previously privileged heap are struggling as businesses are streamlined and affirmative-action programmes, designed to redress decades of racism, kick in.

On streets, whites jostle with black hawkers for begging space at road junctions. And in places like Sanddrift East, one of the last whites-only public housing schemes thrown up by the outgoing National Party, every day is a battle to survive. Most working-class whites could once rely on the bungalow, double garage and *de rigueur* family pool. No longer.

At Sanddrift's community soup kitchen children and mothers gather round the cooker. For many, the fritters are the only meal of the day. Some seem resigned to their place in the new South Africa; others



A family at a community centre in Cape Town. Statistics about white poverty are scarce but everyone working with the poor accepts it is rising. Photograph: Jodi Bieber

are bitter and eager for scapegoats. "No one wants to employ a white man these days," says Ian Reid, 32, a father of two, retrenched in favour of blacks. He says he never supported the old regime but claims the new government is discriminating against whites as the Nationalists did against blacks. When jobs were plentiful in

state-run concerns, whites hardly noticed the absence of a welfare state. Now they struggle to pay state school fees and medical bills. Many, like Mr Reid, are threatened with eviction for rent arrears. "The housing woman told me flat out," he says. "Pay up or hand over the house. There are plenty of blacks waiting." Already five

Coloured (mixed-race) families have moved into Sanddrift. A Coloured woman stands in the soup-kitchen queue, apparently welcome. Mr Reid has old opinions for a non-racist: if a white family takes over his home he says he will swallow it; if a black family moves in he will burn it down.

His neighbour, Sonia Senekal, 33, is

more barefaced: she is furious. Sanddrift is changing colour. "I just don't like blacks," she says. "Sometimes I just cry because I cannot take all this. I was not raised for it." Despite protestations, racism is a constant background noise. As privilege seeps away, many are in no doubt as to where it is going. But when Michelle, a well-

educated thirtysomething down on her luck, says she is not racist she is convincing. The old system, she says, was rotten. But that does not ease her shame at her circumstances. "Please do not take my picture," she begs. "My husband's family is in England." Her builder husband works a 16-hour day and barely keeps the wolf from the door. "Sanddrift is a hellhole," she says. "The place is full of people climbing into bottles because they cannot face sending their kids to bed hungry." She just wants to run. "If I could go tomorrow I would. We were saving up to leave South Africa but we used up every penny when my husband became unemployed last year."

Statistics about white poverty are scarce but everyone working with the poor accepts it is rising. The Ark, a church-run project, houses 1,000 homeless. Two years ago 40 per cent of its clients were white; today that has doubled. Yolande Blom, manager of the low-cost Communicare housing organisation, says poor whites are forming a larger proportion of her clients. She says they elicit little interest or sympathy. This week Anthea Jeffery, of the SA Race Relations Institute, said more affirmative action, encouraged in a new employment Bill, would increase racial tension. But Mrs Blom says that in Communicare's mixed-race housing schemes most families get along. "The good thing... is that poor people are having to struggle together."

It remains to be seen if Mrs Van Zyl will still do the soup run when the majority of her neighbours are not white.

Kidnap makes an ass of Italy's ransom law

By Andrew Gumbel in Rome

DURING HIS eight months of captivity at the hands of Sardinian bandits, Giuseppe Soffiantini was chained to a tree in the woods, had both his ears severed, was given only a fraction of his usual heart medicine and lived off stale bread and spring water. So when the 62-year-old industrialist from the northern city of Brescia was released on a lonely roadside outside Florence on Monday night, he, his family and the whole of Italy breathed a large sigh of relief.

It has been a relief tinged with controversy, however, as the Italian state examines one of the most difficult kidnapping cases of recent years and the apparent failure of its idiosyncratic legislation to deal with the problem.

To many ways, Mr Soffiantini's case is an illustration of how not to handle a kidnap. An attempt to rescue him back in October ended in a shoot-out in which one undercover agent was killed. Subsequent police searches through the brushland of southern Tuscany were sabotaged because someone in the police kept tipping off the media. Right up to the end, negotiations for Mr Soffiantini's release were hampered by the notoriously inefficient Italian

post, which delivered ultimatums well after the deadlines laid down in them had passed.

Most controversial of all has been an Italian law which bars the victim's family from paying any ransom. The idea of the law, which was passed in 1991, is to deter bandits from undertaking kidnaps in the first place, and to leave responsibility for the negotiation process with cool-headed professionals working for the state rather than over-emotional next-of-kin.

But in Mr Soffiantini's case, the mechanism broke down. As family members repeatedly complained, the restriction on their assets only prolonged his agony as they were obliged to raise money from friends. Despite capturing four members of the kidnap gang, the state failed either to sniff out Mr Soffiantini's prison, or to scare the bandits into lowering their ransom demand significantly.

Earlier this month, the state was forced to admit defeat and a magistrate issued a special order unfreezing the Soffiantini family's assets. The ransom money - 5 billion lire (about £2m) - was delivered by Mr Soffiantini's best friend last week in two suitcases.

As Mr Soffiantini, looking haggard and grey but otherwise

in good physical condition, was welcomed back to the bosom of his family, it became clear that the law had been played for a fool and that the worst kind of message had been sent to the Sardinian gangs - keep your nerve, hold on to your hostage and you will get your money in the end.

"Since the law was passed... the length of time victims have spent in captivity has doubled and the consequences for the credibility of the state have been insidious," the crime expert Beppe D'Avanzo wrote in the *Corriere della Sera*.

Mr Soffiantini is not the first kidnap case to give rise to such problems. Two-year-old Fourak Hassan, kidnapped a few years ago, had to be bailed out with state money after months of heart-rending headlines. But this is the first case in which the family's assets have been made available to pay the ransom.

The Justice Minister, Giovanni Maria Flick, insisted yesterday that the law was working in that the number of kidnap victims has fallen sharply since 1991 (just a handful a year, compared with 50 or 60 in the 1970s). But even he said some amendments would be necessary to tighten controls on the ransom money and toughen sentences for kidnappers.

● HAMISH
● AUNTIE FLO
● MICHAEL
● JULIE
● CAROLINE
● PATRICK
● GEORGE
● KAZ & DAVE
● RACHEL
● SIMON
● WILLIAM
● JACK
● PAMELA
● MUM & DAD
● PAULINE
● JACKIE & CHRIS
● GREG
● DEREK
● LILIAN
● HARRY
● ELISABETH
● MAUREEN
● UNCLE TOM
● BUNTY
● MIRANDA
● DAVID
● CHRIS
● DEE
● NICKY
● GRAN
● PHILIP
● CHARLIE
● MIKE
● UNCLE JOHN
● ELLA
● HELEN
● DAVID H
● ANDY
● LIZ
● KYLIE
● STEVE
● ANN
● CLIVE
● BEN
● LISA
● JACKIE
● ALISON
● JO
● EVELYN
● PAUL
● JEREMY
● MANDY
● JOHN
● SAMANTHA
● KAREN
● CHARLOTTE
● KAREEN

France to give gay lovers legal status

By John Lichfield in Paris

HOMOSEXUAL couples in France will soon be able to sign contracts with one another which will give them most of the same legal and tax benefits as married couples.

The government is preparing a change in the French civil code which would give official blessing to "common interest pacts", or formal partnerships between gay couples or heterosexual partners who prefer not to marry.

The Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, promised to do something to improve the legal and financial status of homosexual partnerships during his successful general election campaign last May. The proposed changes in the law, or civil code, will satisfy some gay campaigners but disappoint and infuriate others.

Homosexual groups have been pushing for gay couples to be given the right to marry in the eyes of the state. The reform falls short of this demand. It would not give couples who sign the "common

pacts" - whether homosexual or heterosexual - the right to adopt children or obtain medical help to have children within the health system.

The extension of the new status to any two people living together, whether in a sexual partnership or not, is a deliberate political ploy by the government. Many Socialist deputies had warned in advance that they did not want to vote for something which could be presented by right-wing opponents as a "pederasts' charter".

The Socialist MPs can now argue that the change in the law will also be of benefit to - say - two old ladies who have chosen to live together for companionship.

Even so, the proposed new status for unmarried couples will be fiercely opposed by the family lobby and many members of centre-right parties.

It is unclear whether couples would have to prove that a stable partnership has existed for a given period. A waiting time of five years is under consideration.

Aid reaches quake victims

THE FIRST helicopter with aid reached survivors of an earthquake in northern Afghanistan yesterday, a week after the first tremor struck.

Families walked miles, some barefoot, through the snow from villages where thousands of their relatives and neighbours were killed, to the regional centre of Rustaq, where aid is being co-ordinated. Relief agencies have put the death toll from the quake, and a smaller tremor at the weekend, as high as 4,200 and say thousands more are homeless.

— Reuters, Rustaq

Freetown under siege

WEST AFRICAN intervention force soldiers pressed forward yesterday to the eastern edge of the Sierra Leone capital Freetown, capturing an important ferry terminal and vowing to vanquish the junta soon.

The Nigerian-led forces, who are fighting to return elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah to power, are now only three miles from the city centre.

— AP, Freetown

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Dream machine: Martin Kropp's futuristic design, based on the classic Mark II Jaguar, which won the RCA competition

Big cat in no danger of extinction

The gas-guzzling Jaguar has always been a thirsty beast. And Nonie Niesewand says it's unlikely to go green

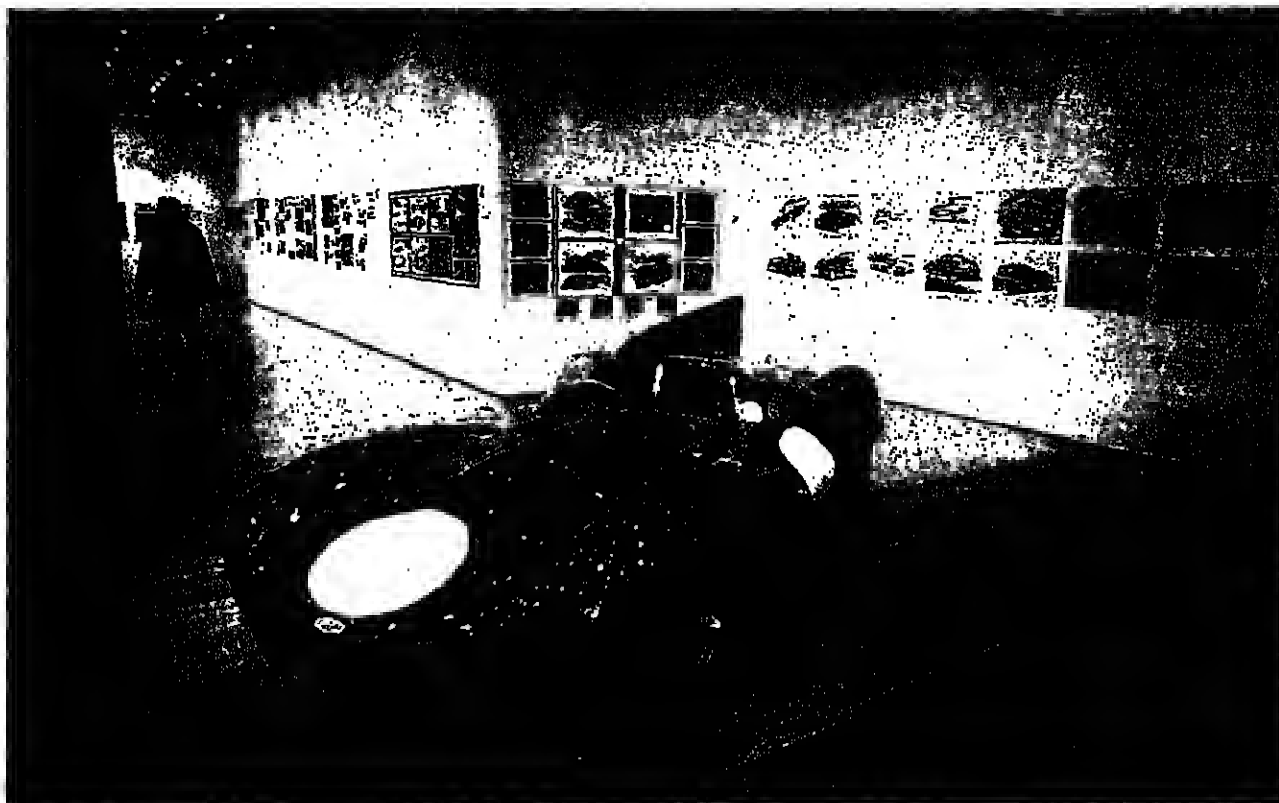
WHEN the Deputy Prime Minister was puffing his way up Downing Street for a photo-opportunity, sending two black despatch boxes ahead in his Jaguar while urging businessmen to walk to work, car designers at the Royal College of Art were unveiling their ideas for new versions of the marque. They were asked to identify a potential future Jaguar product. Were their prototypical cars green, neat, low on fuel and small? Not a bit of it. They were all styled like gas-guzzling automobiles.

Owners of expensive cars love the sleek, shiny speed of a car like a Jag, however much they endorse the worthy ideals of those who want cars to be remodelled in such a way that they have a less detrimental effect on the planet.

Mr Prescott's beloved Jaguar Sovereign 4-litre long-wheelbase, for instance, might thrill its owners with its ability to accelerate from 0-60 in 7.8 seconds, and reach a maximum speed of 144 mph, but Friends of the Earth give the £46,000 vehicle just three out of 10 in its green index.

"It is a gas-guzzler," said a spokesman. Someone in his position should be setting a better example by driving a smaller car giving out fewer CO2 emissions. Jaguar points out, though, that its cars' catalytic converters are set to Californian exhaust emission standards, the world's most stringent.

As Royal College of Art professor, Ken Greenley, who designed a Bentley, points out: You can't sell in the all-important US market if you don't sell in California. So Jaguar, like any other export brand, abides by current conventions on fuel consumption and emissions. Technical designers will



sort out all the low-emission new engines in parallel with the designers.

Far more important for sales than any attempt to be green is the styling of a car. Ninety per cent of Jags are bought by people who like the way a particular model looks. Jaguar, unlike its rivals - Mercedes, Audi, and BMW - never had a generic family look: Jags are driven by heroes and villains.

Geoff Lawson, Jaguar's chief styling guru for the past 15 years, blames legislation for the cloning of cars, because it determines the position of everything from lights to humpers and airbags. So designers are asked to look at the design motifs of Jaguar, the shoulder lines, the number of windows, the slopes and wheel arches, the rounded headlights and the wheels, to translate all these historical motives into

a modern design. In fact, nothing which is parallel with the designers.

Keith Helfet, principal stylist at Jaguar and one of the judges, admitted that classic Jags are hard acts to follow and that, "in other words, it was a bloody difficult project". The Royal College of Art winner, Martin Kropp, 33, from Sweden, managed to "pull together most of Jaguar's marque values" with a compact sporting saloon whose proportions return to the Mark II.

This brilliant futuristic car looks like a snail on acid, crouching at the back, with a long, long bonnet and deep lozenge radiator. Kropp's design, inspired by the classic Mark II, has headlights like predatory eyes and a strong feline graphic on a retro-modern salon. It gives what the designer

calls a "longitudinal flow towards the delicate tapered rear end."

This is as close to the big cat - the Jaguar that's not extinct - that we are going to get until the new Jaguar X200, a BMW-series-5 sized car, is unveiled at the Birmingham Motor Show in October. Due to go on sale in 1999, this modern interpretation of the MK II Jaguar is designed to broaden the appeal from the luxury market to the executive car market. Christopher Frayling, rector of the RCA, who drives a BMW 5, points out that Jaguar drivers have an older profile. That's because it costs £50 to fill just one tank on the X18.

With the top-secret baby Jag, code-named the X400, and due to go on sale in 2001, Jaguar plan to go down in size even more and appeal to the BMW 3-series dri-

vers. Ford Motor Company, Jaguar's owner, announced last month that it would assemble this model at the Halewood plant in Merseyside and the Government has pledged £400m.

The students who down-sized their cars without sparing the stylistic flourishes also reflected the neuroses of our times in their designs. More secure, less open, maybe they are a reaction to the particularly British problem of car break-ins and attacks through windows. Common to all were small windows. Low and sleek, the glass area on Jags is usually not large, but these cars by the 15 first-year post-graduate students taking part in the competition had very little glass, and much more voluptuous bodywork curving protectively around the screens.

A worry that goes right to the top

IN the past I've not seen a great deal of similarity between myself and HM The Queen. Now I know despite the disparity in age, lineage and wealth, we're sisters under the skin.

This week her hairdresser Paul Burgess found out he had not been sacked because the salon had been taken over. No, the Queen had requested his replacement but had asked for her involvement to be concealed.

How refreshing to find out that the anointed ruler and head of the Commonwealth is just like everyone else: terrified of offending a hairdresser. Forget feng shui, cognitive behaviour therapy or psychoanalysis: the real power lies in the hands of your stylist. You don't agree? Think of how much people will pay for the best. Demi Moore once spent \$350,000 having a scene reshot because her hair didn't look right; President Clinton closed an airport and spent \$200 shortening his.

But of course, as in any religion, people expect miracles. Willy Russell's *Educating Rita* sighed over the fact that women expected to be transformed into Farrah Fawcett-Major by a haircut.

It doesn't happen. Disciples can turn nasty when their faith is tested - witness the number of recent legal actions. Only this week Madeleine McDonald, a 38-year-old hotel receptionist, received nearly £3,000 in an out-of-court settlement after she was

GLENDIA COOPER

left "looking like a 70-year-old" by her local salon.

But hairdressers' ability to transform is not just on the physical level. There is also a strong emotional and spiritual bond as well. One friend described how he had once been saved by a friendly stylist who persuaded him to abandon his Kevin Keegan-style perm for a more flattering crop. "I was overwhelmed with gratitude," he says. "I became totally dependent on her, paying £48 for a haircut for years, because I could not break off the relationship."

For retribution is usually swift if you dare disobey the gods. I broke off the relationship with my stylist. An hour later I was standing crying in the middle of Kilburn High Road. "I look like a dog," I wept. "Yes, but a very nice dog," said my then boyfriend trying to cheer me up. He still doesn't quite understand why we split up.

Even if HM decided that Paul Burgess was not to her liking ages ago but still murmured approval when he showed her the back of her head she can be grateful she has not had to put up with the more devout of hair worshippers. Roman Polanski was so obsessed with maintaining Faye Dunaway's sleek bob in *Chinatown* that he once spent half an hour trying to tease a single stray hair into submission. Finally, in fury, he ripped it out by the root. Dunaway immediately stomped off the set, closing down production for a day. The rest of us would probably have meekly agreed that it looked better now.

John Prescott is devoted to his 4.2-litre Jag - despite urging others to take up less environmentally damaging modes of transport. The 1960s model on display at the RCA was an inspiration to students

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

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A flower shop is curved, naturally



IN a space no bigger than coal bunker, 60 square metres with the cutting room in the basement, architect Jan Kaplicky and Amanda Levee of Future Systems have designed a flower shop on the cutting edge of architecture. *Nonie Niesewand* writes. Surgical without being clinical, the new "Wild at Heart" in west London designed for Nikki Tibbles is a laboratory for ideas.

Single flowers in a test tube on bendy wire on either side of entrance vibrate as you step in. The space is all white, walls and floors and built in platform storage cum seating all made of MDF lacquered white. "real white" in many coats. The only colour comes from the oval frame on the shopfront entrance, achieved as simply as painting white on the reverse side of the glass facade. The

greenish tint in the crown glass (which isn't obvious unless the glass is painted or viewed end on) turns pistachio. A white mesh sail for a ceiling stretches taut on yachting halyards. There isn't a straight line in the place. Even the back wall curves. It is the first shop by Future Systems, the prime practitioner of finding new ways to use old materials and new methods of building.

Fertile ground: the new shop

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

THE INDEPENDENT

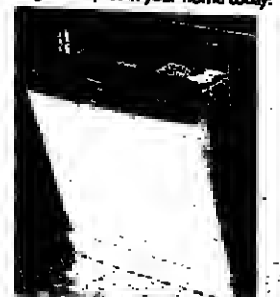
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Not in front of the lawyers ...

Kathy Marks looks at two ways of avoiding the heartache, bitterness and expense of divorce: mediation and the pre-emptive strike of the pre-nuptial contract

MARRIAGE FOR THE MILLENNIUM



SOON after Natasha Roberts told her husband, Stephen, that their 22-year marriage was over, the battle lines were drawn. She wanted to remain in the family home and to keep their two daughters at private schools. Wounded and embittered, he refused to agree to anything.

The stage was set for them to slug it out through their solicitors, a lengthy and acrimonious process that could have ended up in the divorce courts. Early on, though, a lawyer suggested that they try to resolve their differences with the assistance of a mediator, an impartial third party.

By the time that they had completed five sessions, the couple had drawn up a satisfactory financial settlement. Mrs Roberts says that the process enabled them to communicate about practical matters and spared their daughters the spectacle of all-out war.

"We were absolutely unable to sort things out between ourselves," she said. "Mediation brought us together to talk, and helped to put our relationship on a civilised footing."

This is a route that is increasingly being taken by couples negotiating their way through the minefield of separation. It is likely to become even more common when the relevant sections of the Family Law Act 1996 – the hotly-contested divorce legislation introduced by the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay – come into force. The Act requires couples to be informed about the possibility of attending mediation sessions.

But there are still a lot of popular misconceptions surrounding it. Many people confuse it with marriage counselling. In reality, mediators offer no views on a relationship. They act as objective referees as far as the practicalities are concerned, encouraging couples to reach joint decisions on matters such as access to children, division of assets, housing and financial support.

The advantage over communicating through lawyers is that the approach is non-adversarial. But it does not work for everyone, or for every issue, according to Ruth Bross, who mediated for the Roberts. "It is often not appropriate if there has been domestic violence, or if there is a big power imbalance where one partner simply bullies the other," she said.

"Some people are so bitter that they can't sit down in the same room with each other, never mind talk reasonably. Others take part for the wrong reasons. I saw one couple where the man only attended as a way of seeing his partner and begging her to come back."

Mediation services have existed since the 1970s, and there are about 1,000 mediators, many affiliated to the Family Mediators Association or National Family Mediation. Some work alone, others in teams of two, pairing a lawyer with a professional from a social work or counselling background.

Ms Bross, partner in a north London legal firm, Bross & Bennett, stresses that mediation is not a substitute for legal advice; each partner is advised to retain an independent lawyer, and settlements should be legally ratified. Even so, the avenue can be relatively inexpensive: most couples require three to six 90-minute sessions, at a cost of about £250 a session, compared to fees charged by central London lawyers of at least £150 an hour. Legal Aid may be available in some cases.

Hazel Wright, spokeswoman for the Family Mediators Association, says it can be daunting for a couple to unravel their affairs in front of strangers. "They have to get to grips with all sorts of horrors and long-held fears," she says. "But the great thing is that if the couple do reach a settlement, it is theirs, it is not imposed by a third party such as a judge. The names of the couple in this article have been changed."



Match postponed: Barbra Streisand and James Brolin put their wedding plans on hold while their lawyers negotiated a deal

Photograph: Rick Wilking/Reuters

The new vow: 'My earthly goods I thee deny'

IN the first flush of love, the idea of signing a pre-nuptial contract is about as romantic as the prospect of sleeping in separate beds. The last thing that a couple want to contemplate as they walk down the aisle is who gets the fridge-freezer and custody of the dog if they split up.

But given that two out of five new marriages end in divorce in this country, it is not surprising that people are becoming a little more pragmatic. Where contracts on dividing the spoils of union were once the

exclusive preserve of the rich and famous, they are increasingly gaining currency among ordinary couples.

Marked changes in the way we live are the main factor. People are getting married later in life, by which time they may have amassed savings that they are loathe to share, and those entering second marriages may be anxious to make independent provision for existing children.

In the case of film stars and rock singers, the considerations are clearly more pressing. Thus Barbra Streisand recently put on

hold plans to marry her fiancé, James Brolin, while their lawyers hammered out a pre-nuptial agreement.

Michael Jackson, meanwhile, said to be worth £500m, has a contract with his wife, Debbie Rowe, which gives her no rights to his fortune in the event of a divorce. Elizabeth Taylor signed one with her eighth husband, Larry Fortensky, although he still managed to walk away with £1m.

It is partly publicity about such deals that has prompted couples away from the limelight

to follow suit, according to Nigel Shepherd, head of the matrimonial division at Berryman's Law, a national law firm.

"I dealt with one case where the man refused to get married unless his partner signed a pre-nuptial contract," Mr Shepherd says. "He had a business worth £6m that he wanted to leave to the children of his first marriage, and he was not prepared to take the risk."

But such agreements are far from routine here, though in the United States and many

European countries they are part of the culture. It is not that we are more starry-eyed; it is the fact that they are not recognised by the English courts.

The Lord Chancellor's Department is considering reforms that would make these contracts legally enforceable. In the meantime, according to Mr Shepherd, judges are more inclined to take them into account if both partners sought independent legal advice beforehand and if both were candid about their financial affairs.

"The other key factor is

whether provision is made for major changes in circumstances such as the birth of a child," he says. "Otherwise it will not be worth the paper it is written on."

You can, if you like, follow the example of some American couples and write into a contract a pledge to spend quality time together. But you may not stipulate the regularity which which more intimate relations should occur. In this country, it is illegal to enter into a contract for the provision of sexual services – even if the signatories are married to one another.

DILEMMAS

Forget the classroom and take pride in teaching your own children



VIRGINIA IRONSIDE

Eileen is an ex-teacher with three children, 8, 10 and 12. Should she be at home with them or go back to work? She had a costly education and wants to give something back to society, but does not want to deprive anyone of a job. Her husband earns enough for the family's needs

SOMETIMES I feel a bit like Enoch Powell, who was capable of holding such diverse views as the legalising of homosexuality and the retention of the death penalty. I hold pretty feminist attitudes and yet when it comes to women working I find myself being remarkably stuffy. Probably because I was the daughter of a career woman, a high-powered professor, albeit of fashion, and despite the fact that she had her holidays free, I just didn't like it. The rushed meals, the

latchkey round the neck, the feeling that my mother's mind was always somewhere else, the ruined weekends with extra work always made me feel second best.

And that's why, although I can't see why Eileen can't take a couple of afternoons doing supply teaching if she wants to, the idea of her going back to full-time teaching is an anathema. She seems to see "society" as something "out there" and not "in here". Her duty to so-

ciety is surely to give her three children a stable, relaxed home, for it is on our children's future that the maintenance of society depends. She sounds like someone who lives in her head and not her heart, more eager not to deprive some mysterious "someone" of a job, someone she has never met, a mere unemployment statistic, than eager not to deprive her children of her own self, a mother. Eileen has her own class already, albeit a class of three.

There is some idea that once children are three or five it's fine to go back to work, but children need their parents long after they're five years old. They need them when, like Eileen's children, they're eight, 10 and 12, and when they're 15, 16 and 17. The expensive education that Eileen has had will never be wasted as long as she has a family at home, for she can use it in so many constructive ways, educating her children in life, manners and social interaction as well as in education.

So many children's mothers absolutely have to work, because otherwise they cannot live, that it seems quite crazy for Eileen, whose husband can support them all comfortably, to go out to work just because she feels some mysterious duty to society. It would another kettle of fish if she just felt overwhelmed with longing to be faced with 50 screaming kids in a fetid classroom.

Eileen perhaps does not value her role as a mother; perhaps

she sees it as too easy or perhaps she doesn't enjoy her children with the passion that most mothers have. In which case, dare I ask it, but why on earth did she have three children in the first place? Surely not out of social duty? At least I hope not.

WHAT READERS SAY

I would most strongly urge Eileen to stay at home for the next few years and have the time to enjoy her children's return home from school each day.

With this time she will be able to listen to the events of the day and find the things they need the next day for acting in plays, for making things, for lending to friends for a cookery lesson.

She can go to open days, parents' evenings, school plays and concerts. She can shop carefully and economically and cook ahead.

If she misses companionship in the day, local hospitals need cheerful dependable volunteers

– and – she can be free to enjoy evenings and weekends with her husband and children.

It would be such a pity to miss such a lovely time in her new life.

Sonia Supple

Don't feel compelled to go back into teaching. Count your lucky stars that you have a husband able to "support" you and your children and enjoy being a mother and homemaker.

My years at home were the happiest of my life. I managed to avoid returning to teaching until the youngest started school and was only forced back to work by economic necessity. I am now stressed out and the whole family suffers.

Be there when your kids get back from school and enjoy helping them with their homework instead of resentfully feeling, as I do, that yet another child wants my attention at the end of an exhausting day.

Exhausted mum and teacher

Oh dear!! If I was confronted with the dilemma of having a partner earning so much cash s/he could support me and all the family and the agony of not replaying society for my privileged education I would probably commit suicide. How could I live with myself knowing that I was denying a job to one of the needy?

I humbly suggest that Eileen stays at home thus affording a job to a needy person. She could perhaps find some voluntary work using her skills to save her conscience with respect to her desire to repay society for her education.

Dr C R Clark

Eileen should dismiss teaching. If she qualified before the birth of her children she would need retraining.

My recommendation would be training as a teacher of English as a foreign language. The training period is brief and there is plenty of work for those appropriately located. In addition,

the hours can be adjusted to fit family commitments.

John Pelling

NEXT WEEK'S DILEMMA

Although I work with nice people and have plenty of friends in and out of work, I constantly press the self-destruct button by sulking. What happens is I make a friend, we get on great, then I have a big sulk and hurt them. I miss the intimacy of friends, but as soon as I achieve it I wreck it. I feel so guilty and hate myself for it. Now I sometimes have to reschedule my workload to avoid certain people or not go out to avoid "so and so". This has prevented me from getting promotion; I lose motivation which leads to more sulking; I change my job – another cycle starts. I was spoilt as an only child, but that's no excuse. I've lost my best friends, have no one to confide in. I don't want any new friends, I want to hang out with the people I grew up with.

Gill

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Carefree university days, playing at



The sequence of images the Prince of Wales used to create a panorama of the view from his window in Buckingham Palace is typical of the systematic way in which he organised the photographs in his albums



May days at Magdalen College, Oxford, in the city and the surrounding country with fellow undergraduates. One of his companions, Archie Ritchie (right and below) is at the centre of the most light-hearted moments



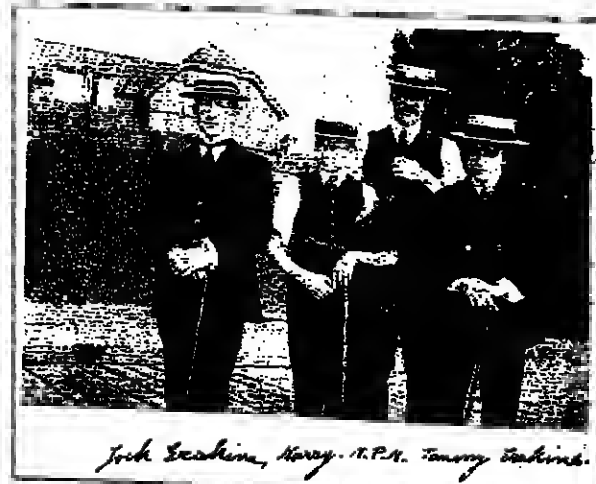
THE PRINCE OF WALES'S PRIVATE RECORD 1914



Edward's brother Bertie, later George VI, at polo



Bertie on the links, Kintyre, 25 April



Companions on a day out with the Leander rowing club at Henley-on-Thames, 12 July

Good fellowship gilds the last summer of peace

MOST golden ages exist only in retrospect. Yet the hot days of the Edwardian summer were a gilded time for the young man who was later to become the only British monarch to relinquish his throne. The dark days of the abdication were, however, a long way off and the life of Edward, the young Prince of Wales, was a round of hunting, polo, balls, foreign travel and undergraduate capers. He was shaking off the restrictions of his childhood and gaining the confidence and composure which were to become his hallmarks. He had gone up to Oxford in October 1912, aged 18, almost 50 years after his grandfather Edward VII had been an undergraduate there, his conduct regulated by strict rules laid down by his father, Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria. "My grandfather was obliged to live apart in a rented house, with a large household, and to wear a special gown when he attended lectures," Edward later recalled. His classmates had to rise respectfully whenever he entered a lecture room. "Fortunately for me all that had passed by the time I went to Oxford," he later wrote in ex-

ile. "I took my place freely among the other four thousand undergraduates - a circumstance that was hailed by the Press as fresh evidence of the innate democracy of the British Monarchical system". But democracy extended only so far. Edward's room had a "rub" installed, making it Magdalen College's first undergraduate bathroom. Even in those days crowds of reporters and photographers descended upon the ancient precincts, to the irritation of Magdalen's fellows and undergraduates alike, to record for the popular Press the more intimate aspects of the prince's adjustment to university life. The academic requirements were not strenuous. "The plain fact is, of course, that I was pretty much of a problem to Oxford," he recalled. "To be sure, I could box a compass, read naval signals, run a picket boat, and make cocoa for the officer of the watch. But these accomplishments, which the Navy had been at such pains to teach me, were manifestly without significance to Oxford's learned dons." He was taught history, political economy, French and

The future king found freedom and friends at Oxford, writes Paul Valley

German by some of Oxford's most formidable brains. Yet despite the university's outlay of intellect, Oxford failed to make him studious and he spent his time socialising, at polo practice on Port Meadow, hunting with New College and Magdalen Beagles, or just riding - his father, horrified at his technique, instructed Edward's equerry, Major the Hon William Cadogan of the 10th Hussars, to make him ride four hours a week. Then there were what Edward called the "mild games of roulette" and general carousing or larking with his undergraduate chums Johnner, Ferguson and Archie (the man with the blue tit on his head in Magdalen Quad and with his trousers off wading through some tributary of the Isis). On Sunday evening after dinner they would repair to a musty little taproom at the foot of the stairway leading to the Junior Common Room where Gunstone, the plump, red-

faced, bald-headed steward, dispensed beer and rough stories. "We never left," Edward later wrote, "until he had performed his famous banana trick - inserting a banana in the neck of a bottle filled with burning paper and watching the vacuum suck it down with a thud. The only time my father came to Oxford to see me I had Gunder perform this feat for his special benefit. 'By God,' said the King appreciatively, 'that is one of the damndest tricks I have ever seen'." Part of this varsity idyll consisted in joining the Oxford Battalion of the Officer Training Corps, in which the heir apparent reached the dizzy rank of corporal. He also chalked up two summer camps under canvas near Aldershot, including one in June 1914 in which he and his fellows were summoned to Laffan's Plain to see the King's birthday parade of the Aldershot Garrison. They watched the troops, in full-dress review order, march past

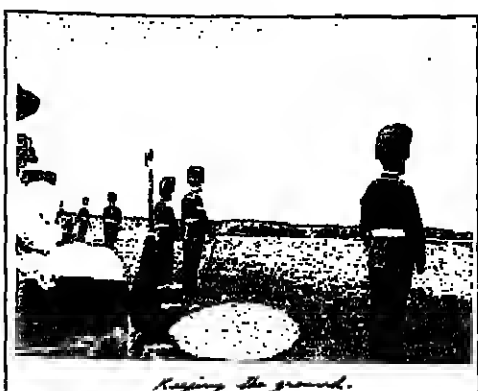
the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Douglas Haig, before long to become Field Marshall Earl Haig. Little did they suspect that within a few months their ranks would be decimated in a war dogged by blunders by that same military leader. In June 1914 it was all a jape. Undergraduates turned up at camp fresh from Henley in Leander blazer and boater, fumbled ineptly with Lee-Enfield rifles, and huffed up their kit for Sunday inspection. Edward reported that the officer's mess in the 1st Life Guards was deserted the month before the War to End Wars began, because most of the officers had gone to Goodwood for the races. War, when it came, fell suddenly. On 28 June, news came of the assassination of the man Edward had previously been called from Oxford to Windsor to meet. Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne, had arrived with his wife to visit George V. "I watched," Edward later wrote, "the Archduke, who could match my father as a wing shot, pull two hundred and seventy three birds down out of the sky. No suggestion of tragedy

then touched the elegant couple who only seven months later would fall before the [Serbian] assassin's bullets in Sarajevo." That assassination touched off a series of events which, thanks to the entanglement of European alliances, inexorably pulled the Continent into war. On 31 July Austria declared war on Serbia; on 1 August Germany declared war on Russia and France; and on 4 August Britain declared war on Germany. "Papa received news of Belgium's mobilisation," Edward wrote in his diary for 31 July. "All this is too ghastly and that we should be on the brink of war is almost indescribable; I am very depressed." Two days after the outbreak of war he was commissioned in the Grenadier Guards. "This was a special honour since my modest 5ft 7ins failed by a conspicuous margin to meet the minimum height of six feet. I was a pygmy among giants." Three days later the King and Queen reviewed the route march of the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards as it passed Buckingham Palace, its wagons tarpaulined for the field of combat. The idyll was over.

soldiers, then the harsh reality of war



Ritchie.



Ritchie's ground.



Cadogan's table, during night.



Cadogan.

Edward's photographs of the Magdalen College section of the Oxford University Officer Training Corps on exercise at Farnborough in June 1914 with (far left) Archie Ritchie and above, the prince's equerry William Cadogan, who was killed in the early days of the First World War



Lefp.

"Resting after a fight at dawn, 6am 30th June". The Prince of Wales on exercise with the Oxford OTC at Bramhill Park, Hampshire

The divided loyalties of a young officer

"Your country needs you," was the recruitment message on the poster of the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener. His private message to the Prince of Wales was somewhat different.

Prince Edward's dearest wish when he received his commission in the Grenadier Guards was to be allowed to fight alongside his contemporaries. But when his battalion was posted overseas - the young prince found himself transferred to the 3rd battalion, which was to remain at home. He protested to his father, only to be told that Kitchener did not mind if the young prince was killed on the front line, but he could not risk his being captured and used as a hostage. One by one he watched the names of his friends, including that of his equerry, Major Cadogan, posted on the lists of young men killed.

His protests at being left behind won him a transfer to the staff of the British Expeditionary Force's commander in France and he spent the rest of the war as a roving morale-raiser and collector of intelligence. He lived frugally, and, though provided with a Daimler, refused to use it because "the cars of the brass hats honked infantrymen off the road" and irritated the troops. Instead he travelled around on a green army bicycle, covering hundreds of miles. His desire always was to be at the scene of the action, and he had what he described as "his closest call" when the Welsh Guards were bombarded in error by French artillery.

As a prince of the crown he could not have done more to share the ordeal of his generation, and although proud of his single mention in despatches - he later framed a letter from Churchill confirming this - he was genuinely embarrassed when he was awarded the Military Cross.

But for Edward the war was significant chiefly as the crucible in which he vastly broadened his range of human experience and honed his skills at communicating with his future subjects, from all backgrounds and countries of the British Empire. In the years after the war he put this to good use in his extensive goodwill tours of the Empire and in a growing interest in domestic politics.

In the Thirties, when unemployment reached terrible new levels, he toured working-men's clubs throughout Britain and enlisted more than 200,000 men and women in occupational schemes. He became the most popular Prince of Wales for a century. Even the Jarrow marchers, when they reached London in their protest trek to demand jobs, cheered Prince Edward when they reached the capital.

And yet there was, for Edward, an ambivalence about the war. Only the year before it began he had, at his mother's suggestion, toured Germany during his Easter and summer vacations from Oxford. "The purpose of these two trips," he later wrote, "was to improve my German and to teach me something about these vigorous people whose blood flows so strongly in my veins". He was related in one way or another to most of the Royal households that reigned in Germany in those days.

As his comrades left for the front, Edward asked to go with them, but was refused. By Paul Valley.

The prince had progressed from one Palace or Schloss to another, sampling the lavish if formal hospitality of his relatives. He stayed with the King and Queen of Württemberg, whose ample figures, he noted, "betrayed the justice they did to their four full meals a day", and then with the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz and finally the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha whose name the British royal family bore until George V issued a declaration in 1917 changing the dynastic name to Windsor.

Edward constantly invented plausible excuses for going to Berlin, "a gay city in those pre-war days", where he got his first taste of night life. He even had an audience with Kaiser Wilhelm II who rose to greet him

Tomorrow: Fort Belvedere and the Fast Set

from behind a great desk at which he sat, not in a chair, but on a wooden block shaped like a horse's body to which was girthed a military saddle complete with stirrups.

He developed not just an affection for his kind but eccentric relatives, but an affinity for the German people.

"Much of what I saw in Germany impressed me," he later wrote. "I admired the industry, the perseverance, the discipline, the thoroughness, and the love of the Fatherland so typical of the German people."

It was an admiration which was to draw the former king to the Nazi regime which took power after that disastrous first war. His love for Germany led him into a naive sympathy with Hitler.

In 1940 Churchill wrote: "The position of the Duke of Windsor on the Continent in recent months has been causing HM and HMG embarrassment as, though his loyalty is unimpeachable, there is always a backlash of Nazi intrigue which seeks to make trouble about him."

More recently there have been suggestions, revealed in intelligence papers released two years ago by the Public Record Office, of a plot between the Nazis and the Duke that he would be restored to his throne if a German invasion of Britain was successful.

The Duke spoke, intelligence sources reported, of how England would then become the leader of a coalition of France, Spain and Portugal, while Germany would be free to march against Russia. It was a scenario which the young prince of 1914 would have found unimaginable.



Route march of 2nd Batt. Grenadier Gds.

The Prince of Wales (second from left) squarebashing with the Guards at the time of the outbreak of the First World War. The 5ft 7in prince said 'I was a pygmy among giants'

The royal party at Buckingham Palace reviews the second battalion of the Grenadier Guards as it sets out on a route march to the war in France, 9 August

The Lords' lesson for Labour's new MPs: dare to speak your minds



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It's embarrassing. Here we are, stern critics of the ermine-clad brigade sitting there unelected in the House of Lords, applauding their courage and perspicuity. First it was the revolt of the Labour peers, joining cross-benchers and a smattering of brave Tories to vote for amendments to the Competition Bill to allow proper testing of Rupert Murdoch's pricing policies. Now it's the decision by the Lords' Science and Technology Committee to set up an inquiry into the case for decriminalising cannabis.

Led by the former vice-chancellor of the Open University, Lord Perry of Walton, a group of peers is to look dispassionately at the drug and the contexts in which it is used. Far be it from us to anticipate the outcome. Suffice it to say that a lot of other distinguished people have, on examining the arguments and consulting their own experience, concluded that the law as it stands is not only ineffective but unsound. To judge by the track

record of the Science and Technology Committee, as of other specialist investigations by the peers, there is every reason to expect Lord Perry's team to respond to the weight of argument and evidence and reach pretty much the same conclusions as the *Independent on Sunday* has lately been campaigning for.

Of course that does not alter any fundamentals about the Lords. A modern democracy has no need of the hereditary principle and ought to look with suspicion on government by appointees. What we have witnessed this week is action by a small group of liberal-minded peers, who know that ultimately what they do and say stands to be countermanded and contradicted by the Government and its supporters in the House of Commons. The House of Lords, moreover, still contains many silent, whipped government placemen, those sit-at-their-hands Tories, purposeless Anglican bishops, not to mention coachloads of hereditary

landowners and peers-by-descent, who turn up only to collect their attendance allowances and when they do speak sound as if 1832 were but yesterday.

It won't do to say that lordly liberalism in itself makes a case for dividing law-making into two segments, granting powers to an older, wiser second chamber, in order to revise or challenge the decisions of the principal legislature. It is plain that the peers have been made to look good only because the House of Commons lately has looked so spineless. The problem is partly that of the historical condition of the Tories - defeated, unimaginatively-led and (still) fatally riven on Europe. They resort to character assassination in place of policy development, quibbling in place of the sustained assault that Labour's plans for Britain deserve (not because they are flawed, but because they will be better thanks to criticism).

But the problem is more Labour's hegemony and the way the Blairite project

seems to have reduced MPs to mere automata. It is a paradox. With that huge majority in the Commons, MPs - one might think - could relax a bit, exercise their cerebral muscles, let fly an occasionally radical thought. Instead the whips patrol the corridors like wardens around an Alabama chain-gang. Labour MPs cry into their beer and bemoan their fate - but totally off the record, old chap.

Sometimes, however, there are glimmers. The anti-Murdoch forces in the Commons are mustering, their ranks said to include even such proto-New Labourites as Giles Radice, fighting the revisionist fight (as one commentator put it) while Tony Blair was still in nappies. Yesterday Margaret Hodge, till now loyal in thought word and deed, sank her teeth into the flesh of Chief Inspector Chris Woodhead, despite the entrée he enjoys at No 10. Whether Mrs Hodge's committee is right to single out Ofsted in this way is not the issue: this kind of

work is what backbench specialists are supposed to do.

Is this evidence that the worms are beginning to turn? No one is advocating parliamentary anarchy nor the abandonment of party discipline in pursuit of the Blair government's central goals. No one is saying that executive government can be effective without being able to rely on guaranteed support in the lobbies. But none of that means they cannot challenge ministers and their prejudices, especially on issues which are far from central to this Government's existence.

Labour MPs should have asked more searching questions about the purposes of British armed forces in the Gulf. They have every right to ask Mr Blair just why preserving the friendship of Rupert Murdoch is so necessary. It is open to them to quiz Mr Straw on his unargued hard line on soft drugs. If the old meo in the Lords can do it, why not the younger meo and women in the Commons?

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LETTERS

Strike on Iraq

The relative ease with which chemical and biological warfare (CBW) production facilities can be built, concealed, dismantled and re-established means that any compromise on unrestricted access for UN weapons inspectors in Iraq would render the inspection process fatally flawed. Those who favour such a compromise are effectively allowing Saddam Hussein to preserve his residual CBW capacity and offering him the chance to continue its development.

As a result, a few years hence, Iraq may be in a position to unveil a strategic biological warfare capability sufficient to embolden Saddam to renew his geo-political ambitions in the Middle East. How would the UN Security Council then respond to Iraqi aggression? What is the likelihood of a coalition being assembled to free Kuwait once more, for example?

Opponents of decisive action now appear to believe that doing a deal with Saddam will prevent conflict in the region and that his desire to acquire weapons of mass destruction has been quenched. A more likely analysis is that his military ambitions remain and that a far greater conflagration is merely being postponed.

Dr STEPHEN PULLINGER
Executive Director
International Security
Information Service
London WC2

Before the US again kills a lot of Arabs, the world should recognise the principle to which these lives will be sacrificed.

It is clearly not the principle that all states must comply with all UN Security Council resolutions binding upon them, since the US clearly does not believe that Israel must comply with all (or, indeed, any) UN resolutions binding upon it, among them Resolution 242 (regarding Israeli-occupied Palestinian and Syrian territories) and Resolution 425 (regarding Israeli-occupied Lebanese territory).

It appears to be the principle that none of Israel's enemies should be permitted to develop or acquire those weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems which Israel already possesses. Enforcing the second principle maintains the imbalance of power which permits Israel to continue defying the first principle with impunity and to continue its occupation of Arab lands. It is this defiance and occupation which makes peace impossible and the use of any

and all weapons in the region an ever-present threat.

The best way to achieve Middle East peace is not to make racially and religiously selective wars but to insist that all states comply with international law and with all UN Security Council resolutions binding upon them. A clear statement to this effect by the UN Security Council, concurred in by the United States, could produce Iraqi compliance in the short term and a broader Middle East peace, with some measure of justice, in the longer term. Without it, the region appears destined for another round of death and destruction.

JOHN V. WHITBECK
London W1

As it becomes evident that, other than in Washington and Whitehall, there is little enthusiasm for a military strike on Iraq, there is a growing wish to find convincing arguments other than the need to ensure compliance with post-Desert Storm resolutions.

Hence the new emphasis by

President Clinton and Tony Blair that the real purpose of military action is to protect Iraq's neighbours from a future attack from Saddam Hussein. If so, it does seem a little odd that all but one of these neighbours, Kuwait, which is in no position even to criticise American policies, are against military action.

Sir FREDERIC BENNETT
Aberavon, Powys

For years we were told that our possession of nuclear weapons was a deterrent against attack by the Soviet Union on a basis of mutually assured destruction. Why are such weapons not now an effective deterrent against the use of chemical and biological weapons by Iraq?

CHARLES HUGHES
Felixstowe, Suffolk

Surely it is not too late, even at this late stage, to go that extra mile and seriously offer a lifting of economic sanctions on Iraq as a diplomatic *quid pro quo* for agreement on inspection?

TREVOR COX
Croydon, Surrey

Save the arts

The *Independent's* Save the Arts campaign, and your emphasis on assiduously covering the arts, will be hailed with gratitude by both artists and audience. But could we take the whole idea of tax relief for the arts one step further by supporting individuals who create the art?

In Ireland, 100 writers a year are given a bursary of a living wage while they work on a project approved by a panel of writers. Actors, musicians, writers and visual artists all benefit from tax-free income. This imaginative approach to funding has not so far crippled the Irish economy. Why can't we have the same benefits here?

ANGELA BURDICK
Oxford

In supporting your call to Gordon Brown to "Save the Arts", I cannot but compare the resources, time and encouragement which the average secondary school gives its gifted mathematicians, scientists and computer whizz-kids, with

the equally gifted musical child, often grudgingly excused from another lesson for instrument tuition, having to pay for it, and then being expected back in their own time to support the school at the prestige concert.

ROGER GARRETT
(Music Teacher)
Kibworth Beauchamp,
Leicestershire

Sex education

Tessa Jowell's recent comments on the need for better sex education in schools (report, 9 February) should be welcomed by everyone who is concerned about Britain's high rate of teenage pregnancies and continuing HIV infections among young gay men. But it is vital that ministers now back up their words with action.

First, we need earlier sex education and freely available contraception, as in Holland, where under-16 conception rates are nine times lower than in the UK, and age at first intercourse higher.

Second, it is time for sex ed-

ucation to be included in the National Curriculum, so that all children are able to access appropriate and important health information.

Third, the stain on British law that is section 28 of the 1988 Local Government Act, which inhibits teachers and others from providing critical advice to young gay men, must be repealed.

The absence of sexual health from all but two paragraphs of the recent Greco Paper *Our Healthier Nation* makes ministerial action even more urgent. Talking about sex is important: acting on sex education is vital.

Dr EVAN HARRIS MP
Liberal Democrat NHS
Spokesman
House of Commons
London SW1

Vain plea

Am I supposed to take placards imploring us to save British farming, mounted on imported tractors, seriously?

DAVID STONE
Weymouth, Dorset

Tunnel rail link

Your article on the proposed Channel Tunnel high-speed rail link and cheaper alternatives ("Cut-price rescue proposed for Channel Tunnel link", 10 February) suggests that the cheapest would "provide half the benefits for one third the cost". This seems to be based on an assumption that the journey time on the English part of the journey into Waterloo would reduce by 15 minutes, rather than by 30 minutes into St Pancras.

However, Waterloo is a much less accessible station for the majority of people in Britain than St Pancras. A rail passenger from anywhere north of London would be likely to save at least one hour's journey time by using St Pancras rather than Waterloo. The benefit to them of a higher-speed link to Waterloo is only one quarter of that of the high-speed link to St Pancras.

D R SMITH
Principal Research Officer
Central Policy Unit
Sheffield City Council

Wedding bills

I read with appalled fascination Glenda Cooper's article (10 February), which cited £12,500 as the average cost of a modern wedding.

When I married in 1937, I was in a job in which women were automatically dismissed on marriage. We therefore got married in a registrar's office during our lunch hours and went back to work in the afternoon, with no celebration of any kind, so that my employer would not know. I did not wear my ring until I obtained work with a more enlightened employer.

The total cost, including the ring, licence and tram fares to and from the registrar's, was less than £6. Our marriage lasted for 59 years, until my husband died in 1996. There must be a moral somewhere in this.

AUDREY HUNT
Woodford Green, Essex

Whose heroes?

I wonder whether the apparent difference of view between Brian Walden and Boyd Tonkin ("Mandela fits the job description for a hero in the modern world", 6 February) would be lessened if each society were allowed to pick its own heroes. Gamal Nasser, not Anwar Sadat, might be the Arab choice; Kwame Nkrumah might be the African choice; Marcus Garvey, and not W E B Dubois might be the Afro-American choice in the pre-war period, while Malcolm X might give Martin Luther King a close shave.

When Western analysts pick non-Western heroes, they go for conciliatory figures, while Western heroes come from the warrior and confrontational class like Ronald Reagan, Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher. If non-Western analysts were to pick Western heroes, such figures as Jimmy Carter, Olof Palme and John F Kennedy might figure prominently. History is still dependent on the subjective view of the historian.

Professor ABOLAJI AKINYEMI
Cambridge

Boyd Tonkin is right. Nelson Mandela is the great hero of our times - in some ways the greatest of the century. The Nobel Prize for Peace has never found a more worthy recipient. It was, however, a shared one. As an exceptional tribute to an exceptional man, should not a second Nobel Peace Prize be awarded to him?

ROBERT SHELTON MP
(Ashton-under-Lyne, Lab)
House of Commons

How to survive those awkward moments with a perfectly delicious wife



MILES KINGSTON

Every time I have a bath, I start worrying about the kind of people who shop at Sainsbury's.

The reason is simple. There is a pile of magazines on our bathroom floor, and the one on top is a copy of *Sainsbury's Magazine* for June 1995, which catches my eye every time I manoeuvre myself into the bath and begin the long process of getting out again.

The first thing that catches my eye on the front cover (after the Great Summer Offer - "Save up to £30 on food, drink, barbecues and beauty at Homebase and Sainsbury's") is a colour photo of marmoreal ice cream oozing in frosted grapes below a caption reading "Della's glorious dairy desserts". Fair enough. Very Sainsbury's.

Then comes another feature heading which reads: "Perfect Packing: Look great, straight from the suitcase". This is followed by "Safe Tanning: The best fakes around", at which point my brow begins to furl.

Articles on how to pack? On how to sunbathe safely but deceptively? Can this be aimed at the pale, crumpled people I see round me in the queues at Sainsbury's? The next heading is "Sunshine Food: Recipes for outdoor eating", which is a bit more like the Sainsbury's I know, but then comes the one that really floors me. "Breaking it Gently: How to say 'I don't love you any more'".

After this, what I normally do is lie there, geotly stewing, trying to visualise the kind of readers *Sainsbury's Magazine* is aiming at, and after several years of cogitation I have arrived at a scenario something like this...

Scene: the barbecue area of a lovely garden, made more beautiful by things from Homebase, especially the shower curtains to stop the fat splashing. Susan is toying with some red peppers marinated in olive oil, looking at her watch and wondering if she can put them on the barbecue yet. She is clearly waiting for someone. Ah! Here he is! It is her husband, Peter.

Susan: Peter! You're late!

Peter: Yes. You see, Susan, I've been seeing someone...

Susan: Oh, yes, your meeting in Paris. How did it go?

Peter: Paris? Meeting?

Susan: Don't you remember? You went off yesterday morning to Paris saying you'd be back for lunch today!

Peter: Did I? Look, Susan, I don't know how to say this, but...

Susan: And you look lovely, sweetie! At last those tips about packing are beginning to pay off!

Peter: Packing?

Susan: Remember I told you how to look great straight from the suitcase? NEVER mix up your overnight things with your smart things. ALWAYS leave everything on a hanger while folded and DON'T mix up your dirty washing with your clean stuff - send the dirty stuff home every day by post!

Peter: Yes. I remember now. I expect you're right. Look, Susan, there's something I have to tell you...

Susan: There certainly is!

Peter: There is?

Susan: That you've noticed my new suntan! Yesterday, when you went to Paris, I was as pale as one of Della's vanilla desserts! Now I'm a delicious coffee mahogany!

Peter: That's because they were offering a great £30 discount off tins of wood-staining agents at Homebase!

Peter: Wood staining...! But...

Susan: No, I know what you're thinking, but it's quite safe! I asked at Homebase, and they say I should be able to go out in the rain in two days, and take coats of paint in five.

Peter: Look, Susan, there's something that's more important than suntanning... Susan: You're right. So, will it be tuna with, unusually, watercress, or fillet steak marinated in mustard and anchovy oil?

Peter: I'm not sure I can really...

Susan: And after that it's your favourite - crème brûlée! And it's lovely and dark the way you like it, and this time I haven't burnt it - I've discovered a safe way of giving crème brûlée an artificial bronzing!

Peter: Susan. Listen to me. This is the hardest thing I've ever had to say to you. It's about me and your best friend, Emma...

Susan: Emma? Oh, God, I know what you're going to say!

Peter: You do?

Susan: Yes. You're going to say that you prefer crème brûlée the way she does it!

Peter: No. Well, yes. That as well. But the main thing is that she and I...

Susan: Darling?

Peter: Yes?

Susan: Just pop inside and bring a bottle of something chilled, would you? Just you and me, and a glass of Chablis! How lovely!

Peter: (dully) Y-e-es... Oh, God...

The horror of war:
Basra, 1991
Photograph:
Kenneth Jarecke

What madness is this – bombs are not the way to peace



ROBERT FISK THE DRUMS OF WAR

I have been reminded of some familiar odours these past few days. The first is the terrible, nauseous stench I endured for hours on the overnight train from Ahwaz to Tehran back in the Eighties, as I shared a carriage with dozens of young Iranian soldiers. All of them were coughing up Saddam Hussein's poisons from their lungs into blood-red swabs and bandages. And the mustard gas that was slowly killing them permeated the whole great 20-carriage train as it thundered up from the desert battlefields of the first Gulf War, through the mountains to the city where almost all these men would soon die and be buried. After only an hour into the journey, I was forced to throw open the carriage window to avoid vomiting.

No sooner had I filed a series of reports to London on this new and terrible war crime of Saddam Hussein than a British diplomat, lunching with one of my editors in London, remarked that "Bob doesn't seem to understand the situation." True, he said, gas was a terrible weapon. But Saddam was fighting the West's war against Iranian fundamentalism – a danger which might set the whole Middle East ablaze and which could threaten the entire world. Wasn't *The Times* – the paper for which I then worked – putting a little too much emphasis on Saddam's sins?

So the other smell I recall this week is the stink of hypocrisy when – in 1990 – the world's statesmen began to whip their people into line for war against the man they had supported in his conflict against Iran. The French had sold Saddam Mirage jets. The Germans had provided him with the gas that had the almost wrenching effect on the train from Ahwaz. The Americans had sold him helicopters for spraying crops with pesticide (the "crops" of course, being human beings). The British gave Saddam battle bridges. And I later met the Cologne arms dealer who flew from the Pentagon to Baghdad with US satellite photos of the Iranian front lines – to help Saddam kill more Iranians.

And oddly enough, whenever I mentioned this back in 1990, after Saddam had invaded Kuwait, I was admonished by diplomats. There's no point in dwelling on the past, I was told. The only way to deal with Saddam now was war. Did I have any better ideas? And within a few weeks, Saddam – and yes, he is a venal, cruel, wicked, evil man – was being transformed into the Hitler of Iraq, just as the Israelis had called Yasser Arafat the Hitler of Beirut in 1982, and just as Eden had called Nasser the Mussolini of the Nile in 1956. Normally quite rational individuals became cheerleaders for war, shouting hysterically when I suggested that the results of this war might not quite match the expectations. Serious newspapers began to advocate the occupation of Baghdad and a war crimes trial for Saddam.

And once that battle was over and Saddam was expelled from Kuwait, we were told by our leaders that Saddam had been "defanged". Our smart bombs and guided missiles had destroyed his army, our Patriot missiles had protected us from his Scuds – and at little cost to the Western alliance. Then it turned out that all this was untrue. But at least we never claimed then that he was capable of harming more than the Middle East.

So what madness is seizing Messrs Clinton and Blair today? After seven years of inspections – seven years, for heaven's sake – UN arms inspectors have not been able to find all of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. Thousands were dying of malnutrition and lack of medicine, a million if you believe some UN officials. Mass funerals for babies (70 in one cortege on the last count) made their way through Baghdad. Propaganda for the odious Saddam, of course; but few thought the coffins were empty. And then Saddam – shrewdly appreciating that America's craven surrender to Israel's settlement building had convinced Arab leaders that the "peace process" was a betrayal of the Palestinians – decided to ban the UN inspectors from his palaces.

And what happened? Our masters informed us that Saddam was even worse than he was before we beat him the first time. Far from just threatening the oil rich Gulf, the chief UN inspector informed us that the Iraqis had enough anthrax "to wipe out Tel Aviv" (note the city he chose – not Dhahran or Riyadh but Tel Aviv, although all three had been rocketed in 1991). And then our own trustworthy Foreign Office announced that Saddam now posed a threat to "the whole world". In Washington, Mr Blair repeated this, saying that he had enough weapons "to wipe out the world's population".

The whole world? Is this true? In Beirut these past few days, I have been trying to remember where I last heard these words. It took me some time before I recalled where. I last read them when I was at school, reading the *Eagle* comic, wherein a space hero called Dan Dare – a kind of 1950s version of Tom Cruise – would regularly do battle with the Mekon, a green and ectoplasmic alien creature who had the ability to wipe out the entire world (unless he was first destroyed/defanged/put back into his box or whatever). Has it really descended to this? The Middle East, with all its complexities and dangers and religious tension – yes, and its evils – is being turned into a comic strip in which Dan Dare will launch his space-age high-tech at the Mekon of Baghdad.

Perhaps the American public and its pro-Israeli representatives in Congress and the Senate accept this nonsense? But do we, whose Prime Minister is chanting all this at Bill Clinton's side? British readers should be aware of what US columnists are demanding. In *The New York Times*, William Safire has been recommending "sustained bombing of all suspected weaponry sites, including palaces occupied by civilians used as hostages", while in *The Washington Post*, Richard Cohen has been saying of Saddam: "He is not ... a mole but a rat. It would be best to exterminate him ...". And last weekend, when I recalled the 1991 war and its rhetoric to an American radio commentator, I heard the same weary response. "Let's not talk about the past, Bob. What do we do now?"

Well, the world might, after all, demand that all Middle Eastern states apply all UN security council resolutions – which include an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land as well as the disarming of Saddam Hussein. It could insist that within five years, all weapons of mass destruction in the region – not just Iraqi weapons but Syrian missiles and Israeli nuclear rockets – be destroyed. It could offer a real peace in the Middle East, based on human rights, justice and a Palestinian homeland.

But no, like Dan Dare we prefer to do battle with monsters. And we are beating the old 1991 drums of war, our claims so preposterous that they bury the real viciousness of the real Saddam. For war is not primarily about victory or defeat. It is about death. It represents the total failure of the human spirit. And if we really are going to participate in this obscenity again, is it not possible to do so with the humility of men who know what we are doing?



PATRICK COCKBURN THE MYTH OF AIR POWER

The justification for an air attack on Iraq is very like that for the strategic bombing of Germany by Britain and the US in 1942-45. It was easy then to make the claim that Hitler deserved whatever punishment he got. Post-war investigation showed that, in fact, the bombing did little to harm his regime, or to shorten the war despite the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Germans it caused.

A similar political and military failure may await the impending bombardment of Iraq. As with the Gulf War, hundreds, if not thousands, of Iraqi civilians will certainly die. But this will not "punish", or even damage, Saddam Hussein. There is no reason why it should make him more

national weapons agreed by Iraq in 1991. Ever since, Iraq has systematically tried to conceal them. But it is also clearly true – and Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said as much soon after she took office last year – that for seven years the US has been determined not to lift sanctions on Iraq so long as Saddam Hussein was in power.

It is this policy that is no longer sustainable. Iraq is not going to cooperate with weapons inspectors for any length of time if there is no real prospect of sanctions being lifted. The only way to resolve the crisis in the long term is to bring to an end the immediate consequences of the Gulf War. In other words, an end to the embargo and the isolation of Iraq should be discussed at the same time as a final accounting of Iraq's non-conventional weapons in the same negotiations.

The process of UN inspections was always bizarre. No sovereign state, whether it is run by Saddam Hussein or Nelson Mandela, is going to agree, if it can possibly help it, to foreign observers – often former intelligence officers – having free run of its military, intelligence and government offices. Iraq only agreed to this in 1991 under the threat of invasion by an army of half a million men.

This army no longer exists.

One of the myths of the Gulf War is that "smart" weapons have revolutionised warfare. This has done no end of good to the budgets of airforces around the world.

willing to cooperate with UN inspectors. General Brent Scowcroft, the US National Security Adviser in the Gulf War, warns: "We bombed him heavily [in 1991], more heavily than we can now; and he didn't change his mind about anything."

The objective of the allied air offensive during the Gulf War was clear: to force Iraqi troops to leave Kuwait which they had invaded the previous year. Eight years later the aim of the airstrikes is much less easily attainable. It is to force Saddam Hussein to cooperate with UN inspectors looking for his non-conventional weapons. All the Iraqi leader needs to do to frustrate American and British war aims is to refuse to change his policy.

It is not enough for President Clinton and Tony Blair to say that all they want is the implementation of the UN resolutions on inspection and destruction of non-conven-

The Gulf War alliance has fragmented. Saddam Hussein's grip on his own country is probably stronger than at any time since the invasion of Kuwait. Allied planes still overfly Iraqi Kurdistan, but on the ground the Iraqi leader is now largely in control.

There is a growing acceptance on the far right in the United States that air power alone will not damage Saddam Hussein. They put forward the alternatives of ground attack or external subversion. Supporters of these neo-colonial ventures show a dangerous ignorance of what really happened in the Gulf War as well as the political history of Iraq over the last seven years.

The Gulf War was much less of an all-out military conflict than appeared at the time. Given the disparity of forces the Allies were bound to win. But the Iraqis had a large army with long experience in the eight-year-long war with

Iran. Allied casualties were so low because at the last minute the Iraqi leader ordered his men to withdraw from Kuwait.

An Iraqi brigadier, now in exile in London, told *The Independent* that his unit received "three separate messages – from the army, party and military intelligence – telling us to withdraw. This was to show us that the orders were real and not a fake sent by the Allies." He says that if the Iraqi army had not pulled out of their prepared positions, protected by vast minefields in Kuwait, it could have inflicted heavy casualties on the Allies.

Saddam Hussein evidently calculated that if he withdrew voluntarily from Kuwait – and Allied casualties were low – that he would not be pursued to Baghdad. He may even have been covertly told so by Washington. These historical points are important today because the ease with which Kuwait was reconquered in 1991 has given the impression that any new invasion would succeed with equal ease.

The option of externally directed internal subversion is equally flawed. The CIA made repeated efforts between 1991 and 1996 to subvert the regime in Baghdad, based first in Iraqi Kurdistan and then in Jordan. In 1995 it became involved through its operatives in Kurdistan – though not fully backed by Washington – in a plan to build up an opposition army in the Kurdish provinces. It hoped that this would ignite revolts in the Iraqi army.

It never happened. In 1996 a military conspiracy in Baghdad was bloodily crushed. This appears to have given Saddam Hussein the confidence to capture the Kurdish capital Arbil with his tanks. Over 100 members of the Iraqi opposition were captured and killed. The CIA was forced to evacuate its vast operation from Kurdistan.

A further problem for President Clinton is that that the Gulf War created exaggerated expectations. It may also have dissipated a healthy scepticism in the US about the use of airpower which followed its failure in Vietnam. General Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of Desert Storm, says: "We run the risk of doing the same thing we did to North Vietnam." He explained that in Vietnam the airforce, frustrated at its failure to achieve its political or military goals, continually escalated its air attacks.

Air power has a sorry history in the Middle East as a means of political coercion. Ironically, it was pioneered in Iraq where Winston Churchill as Colonial Secretary in 1922 withdrew most of the British

army on the grounds that it could be held by the RAF. Arthur "Bomber" Harris, later head of bomber command, served his apprenticeship dropping bombs on Kurdish villages.

One of the myths of the Gulf War is that "smart" weapons have revolutionised warfare. This has done no end of good to the budgets of airforces around the world. Airforces need to argue for perfect accuracy to justify the expense of the new weapons. Although only 7 per cent of the munitions dropped during the Gulf War were "smart", they made up 84 per cent of the cost. At times these weapons were very accurate. They hit bridges, ministries and telecommunications towers in the heart of Baghdad.

But the Iraqi government went on functioning. Even the uprising in the south of Iraq never spread to Baghdad, which is the key to political

power in Iraq (eight million Iraqis out of a total population of 20 million live in the metropolitan area of the capital). There is little chance of this recurring. Ordinary Iraqis are deeply cynical about the motives of the US and Britain. And even if they did rise up any revolt would be crushed in blood.

It is reasonable for the US and Britain to ask for the final destruction of Iraqi non-conventional weapons. But the last six months have shown that this is not going to happen through the present UN inspection process, even buttressed by air attacks. The only possible way to secure destruction of biological or chemical weapons, if ground invasion is ruled out, is to offer an immediate end to the embargo as a direct quid pro quo.

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Maurice Schumann

Maurice Schumann, writer and politician: born Paris 10 April 1911; Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs 1951-54, Minister for Foreign Affairs 1969-73; married 1944 Lucie Daniel (three daughters); died Paris 10 February 1998.

Maurice Schumann was a long-standing friend to Britain whose desire to enlist British energies in the shaping of Europe stretched from his pro-Eden, anti-Munich writings of the 1930s to his active support of Britain's entry into the EEC when he was French Foreign Minister in 1969-73.

For the four years of the German occupation of France, he was the familiar radio voice of de Gaulle's London team, daily reminding his countrymen that, despite Pétain's armistice, there was a France, based in Britain, that was still at war with Hitler. After the Second World War he was to be a leading proponent of greater European integration, seeing it as an essential condition of preserving peace and a guarantee against a disgruntled and isolated Germany's becoming a threat once more to French security. Significantly, it was disagreement over the nature and degree of European integration that led to his serious rift with de Gaulle in 1962-65, despite their strong mutual regard.

Schumann's career reflects several of the most significant developments in 20th-century French political life. It also mirrors their tensions, in that his attempts to remain loyal to his principles ironically highlighted their disparate nature and the contortions needed to keep them capable of yielding results. This was particularly evident in his attempts to reconcile his fidelity to Christian Democracy with his admiration for de Gaulle and firm government.

Schumann, a Jewish convert to Catholicism, was an enthusiastic member of the pre-war Jeune République, a small Christian Democratic group and one of the progenitors of the Mouvement Républicain Populaire (MRP) which was to emerge at the Liberation in 1944. He wrote extensively for Franciscan's Christian Democrat newspaper *L'Aube*, of which he was the political editor from 1944 to 1951, and also for various Catholic reviews. This he did under diverse pseudonyms, so as not to impinge upon his professional duties with the Havas Press Agency.

His journalism in London in 1933-35 made him an obvious

choice for liaison work with the British army when he voluntarily enlisted for military service in 1939. Captured by the Germans, he escaped and made his way to London, where he combined his daily broadcasts for de Gaulle with the co-editorship of a monthly periodical, *Volontaire pour la Cité Chrétienne*.

After returning with de Gaulle to France in 1944, he became a founder member of the MRP, whose professed aim was to reconcile the Church with the Republic and the working class with the Church. He was elected national president of the party a few months later.

But the euphoria and camaraderie of the Liberation soon gave way to bitter divisions between the MRP and de Gaulle. As a Deputy of the Nord department from 1945 to 1958, Schumann witnessed at close quarters de Gaulle's resignation from the premiership in January 1946 and his subsequent opposition to the Fourth Republic.

Schumann played a major part in the successful campaign of 1946 to establish a two-chamber parliament, instead of the single one favoured by the Communists and Socialists, and he tried hard to dissuade de Gaulle from a hostile crusade in favour of a stronger executive. The systematic wrecking tactics of de Gaulle's *Rassemblement du Peuple Français* in parliament, in 1947-53, soured relations between the two men for much of the Fourth Republic and the rift was further widened by Schumann's involvement in the tentative moves towards greater European integration while junior minister for Foreign Affairs, from 1951 to 1954.

These were difficult years for Schumann since he found himself increasingly left by his superiors to deal with the worsening situation in the French protectorates of Tunisia and Morocco. He was especially incensed by what he saw as the cynicism of the Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, who turned a blind eye to the irre-



Schumann: friend to Britain

sponsible initiatives taken by French officials in the Maghreb, intent on frustrating progress towards greater autonomy. Although Bidault was a fellow founder of the MRP in 1944, Schumann predicted as early as 1947 that he would move steadily towards the far right.

The collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958 convinced Schumann that a return to power of de Gaulle was the only viable option; and, following the example of several of his MRP colleagues, he entered government four years later as minister for regional development. Within a month, however, withdrawing public comments by de Gaulle on European integration resulted in the resignation en bloc of the five MRP ministers, and it seemed to many that Schumann's links with de Gaulle were now irrevocably broken.

Yet the rapid decline of the MRP, following Jean Lecanuet's ineffective challenge to de Gaulle in the 1965 presidential election, persuaded Schumann once more that de Gaulle was the best guarantee of French political stability; and 1967 was to see him back in government as Minister for Scientific Research, and then as Minister for Social Affairs, following the violent upheavals of May 1968. However it took the resignation of de Gaulle and the election of the benignly pro-European Pompidou in 1969 to give Schumann his chance of the long-coveted prize of the Quai d'Orsay.

His four-year tenure was characterised by greatly improved French relations with Britain and America, and his rapport with Edward Heath was particularly cordial. Unexpected defeat in the parliamentary elections of 1973 brought an end to his ministerial career.

It was paradoxically at this juncture, in 1974, that he formally joined the Gaullist party – four years after the death of the man he so admired, and in the year that the presidency moved from the Gaullists into the hands of the more overtly pro-European Giscardians. It was also the year Schumann was elected to the Académie Française, as well as to the Senate where he combined two more decades of active political life with continued literary productivity.

His literary output included numerous books of political and religious comment, and two of his novels were adapted for television. Perhaps appropriately for a Jewish convert who contributed much to Christian thought, his last book was *Bergson ou le retour de Dieu* (1995).

— Maurice Larkin



A set for living in room by Mongiardino for Elsa Peretti's La Torre, in southern Tuscany

Photograph: Fritz von der Schulenburg / Interior Archive

Renzo Mongiardino

Renzo Mongiardino, architect and interior designer: born Genoa 12 May 1916; (one daughter); died Milan 16 January 1998.

Renzo Mongiardino was Italy's leading classic interior designer, and a creator of magnificent theatre and film sets. Sumptuous brocade, faux marble and intarsia, neoclassical stucco work and neo-mannerist frescoes were the building blocks of his stately visions.

It was the theatre that first provided an outlet for his talent and, in the words of one colleague, "helped to free his imagination". As an architecture student in pre-war Milan he had been exposed to the new orthodoxies of the Modern Movement, but, fortified by his childhood in an 18th-century palazzo in Genoa, he resisted their pull.

In post-war Italy an architect who took his inspiration from Vitruvius, Bernini and Palladio had few options open to him outside teaching or restoration. But Mongiardino needed to create. His mother was an airy Genoese beauty, his father a theatrical impresario – and

young Renzo took from the one a penchant for romantic dreamscapes, from the other a taste for the stage and a talent for organising people. It was perhaps only natural that he should drift into theatrical and operatic set design.

La Scala and Covent Garden were his practice living rooms. Among his most memorable productions were *Tosca* (starring Maria Callas) at Covent Garden in 1964, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, *La Traviata* at La Fenice in 1972, directed by Gian-Carlo Menotti, and finally, in 1995, *Eugene Onegin* for the Spoleto Festival. He was a perfectionist, preferring stoutly built sets to flimsy facades, and seeing little difference between the creation of an illusion that was to last for 10 performances and the design of a set for living in.

Later he carried the same solid alchemy into the cinema, collaborating especially with Franco Zeffirelli on films such as *Romeo & Juliet* (1967) and *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* (1971). Zeffirelli, whose house in Positano he later decorated, remembered Mongiardino as somebody who "spread culture through his

work, and taught that luxury could be perfectly simple".

In his introduction to the 1993 book *Roomscapes: the decorative architecture of Renzo Mongiardino*, Mongiardino dates his career epiphany to the age of 12, when his family moved into their new house, with its vast echoing salon. "How beautiful it is empty," said his mother. "It will be difficult to decorate." But it wasn't: the old furniture fitted in like a dream. "I realised then that if a room has good bone structure, even an unlikely object will fit into it and enliven it."

A carefully groomed Artist-and-Crafts beard framing his keen, owlish face was Mongiardino's only concession to eccentricity; otherwise, he went about dressed in simple work clothes, with a raincoat that doubled as a carpenter's overall. The same contrast could be seen in his attitude to interior design. His roster of clients sounds like a kidnapper's wish-list: Agnelli, Onassis, von Thyssen, Rothschild, Versace. But, while Mongiardino rarely had to worry about his budget, he was interested in porphyry and damask only in so far as they created a mood. Often faux

marble, fake Tiepolo frescos and Oriental wall hangings made out of fute sackings answered the purpose just as well.

Like a Renaissance artist, Mongiardino worked at the centre of a *bottega* of faithful collaborators. One was an expert at recreating the look and feel of materials such as Cordoba leather with the help of pressed cardboard and felt-tip pens; another – a Bergamese artisan known simply as *Il Bergamasco* – worked wonders with fake marble and terracotta reliefs.

His interiors reflect an insatiable curiosity, a magpie approach to tradition. One much-imitated design dealt with the problem of an unfeasibly high ceiling by suspending a rich silk pavilion from the centre, "like a Turkish tent I'd seen in a museum in Stockholm". Rubens's house in Antwerp, the Café Florian in Venice, a Russian water-colour of the 1840s – wherever Mongiardino travelled, he collected fuel for the imagination. Sometimes the reference was deliberately playful, as when he lined the study of a New York apartment with intarsia panels that recalled Federico da Montefeltro's *studiolo* in Urbino. Ex-

cept that, behind the lines and the classical facades, a forest of skyscrapers looms up.

Mongiardino saw interiors with a kind of anthropomorphic complicity: *felice* ("happy") was his favourite adjective for a well-balanced room, the kind that needed no make-up. But he was equally sensitive to the psychology of the decorator-client relationship, believing that "arguments and open discord are often more productive than passive acceptance". He leaves a stable of younger disciples like Fiorenzo Cattaneo and Roberto Perregalli, who are dedicated to carrying on the master's work.

At the time of his death, Mongiardino was working on two big projects. One was an ideal city in the tradition of Urbino or Pienza which, with the backing of a group of Italian businessmen, was close to leaving the drawing board. The other was the faithful reconstruction of the La Fenice Opera House in Venice. It would be difficult to find two projects that better sum up Renzo Mongiardino's lifelong fusion of Piranesian fantasy and historical rigour.

— Lee Marshall

Professor Laurence Gower

Laurence Cecil Bartlett Gower, solicitor: born 29 December 1913; Sir Ernest Cassel Professor of Commercial Law, London University 1948-52; Visiting Professor, Law School of Harvard University 1954-55; Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Lagos 1962-65; Law Commissioner 1965-71; FBA 1965; Vice-Chancellor, Southampton University 1971-79; married 1939 Peggy Shepperson (two sons, one daughter); died London 25 December 1997.

On the occasion of the award of one of Laurence Gower's many honorary degrees, the Orator at the ceremony remarked that he foresaw Gower becoming to Company Law what Gray is to Anatomy. "Jim" Gower produced his seminal treatise *The Principles of Modern Company Law* in 1954. It has continued through several editions, acquiring co-authors on the way; it also had the unusual distinction for a living author of being regularly quoted in court.

Gower read Law at University College London, where he gained a first in his LLB in 1933;

he obtained his LL.M in 1934 and was admitted as a solicitor in 1937. During the Second World War he first joined the Royal Artillery as a private and served under Sir Mortimer Wheeler, who always referred to him as "Gunner Gower". Later in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps he became involved in planning the D-Day landings at the Operations Centre at Wilton House in Wiltshire.

Following his war service he developed a special interest in legal education and lectured at his old college from 1948 when, at the youthful age of 35,

he was appointed the Sir Ernest Cassel Professor of Commercial Law in London University. Whilst holding the chair at University College, he spent a year as a Visiting Professor at Harvard and throughout the 1950s demonstrated his keen interest in the status of law teachers by acting as honorary secretary of the Society of Public Teachers of Law.

Turning his attention to the problems of the emerging independent African countries, Gower went for three years from 1962, with the backing of the Gulbenkian Foundation,

as adviser to the Nigerian Council and took a post as Dean and Professor of Law at the University of Lagos. There he fiercely upheld the independence of the university from government interference which later resulted in his being sacked for his temerity. His legend lives on in Nigeria, where he set up the professional Law School of Lagos, and in Ghana, where he drew up the Ghana Company Law Code.

Returning to Britain in 1965, he took up an appointment in the newly constituted Law Commission for the Reform of

English law and worked on the Osmund Committee on Legal Education.

In 1971 he was appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Southampton University, which he guided from the outset with a sure and steady hand on the helm but also with a remarkably open and accessible style. His tall angular figure, pipe in hand, was a familiar sight holding informal court at the bar of the Senior Common Room.

During his eight years at the university he promoted and presided over many major developments at a time of in-

creasing financial stringency. There was a significant increase in student numbers, the expansion of the new Medical School, the provision of special residential facilities for disabled students and the opportunity for the first time for all freshers to be accommodated in university accommodation.

During his Vice-Chancellorship he served on Harold Wilson's Royal Commission on the Press, and following his retirement in 1979 he undertook a considerable four-year task when he was called in by the Department of Trade to provide



Gower: company law

advice to the Government on financial services, effectively a one-man commission. His work was embodied in the 1986 Financial Services Act.

— P. B. Morke

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

BESSE: To Eryl and Antonia, a daughter, Eleanor Natasha Mason Joy, on Monday 2 February 1998 in Paris, a sister for Antonia and Melisande.

Announcements for Births, Marriages, Deaths, Adoptions, Weddings, Funerals, Memorials, etc., must be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1, Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned to 071-293 2072 or faxed to 071-293 2070, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (weddings, funerals, forthcoming marriages, etc.) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Honorary Member and Paul Harris Fellow, attends a Dinner at the Rotary Club of King's Lynn, Norfolk.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; F Company Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

Birthdays

Admiral Sir Peter Abbott, Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff, 56; General Sir John Akhurst, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe, 68; General Sir John Archer, former Commander-in-Chief, UK Land Forces, 74; Professor Arnold Beckett, pharmacist, 78; Miss Anne Croble, actress, 64; Mr Howard Davies, Chairman, Securities and Investments Board, 47; Dr Kenneth Edwards, Vice-Chancellor, Leicester University, 64; Mr Stephen Gibbs, former chairman, Turner and Newall, 78; Lord Greene of Hurrow Wood, former trade union leader, 88; Mr Steve Hackitt, rock guitarist, 48; Mr Paul Hamlyn, publisher, 72; Miss Christine Hancock, General Secretary, Royal College of Nursing, 53; Mr Simon MacCorkindale, actor, 46; Sir Robin Mackworth Young, Librarian-Emeritus to the Queen, 78; Mr David McLennan, ambassador to the Lebanon, 53; Lord Morrison, a former Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 67; Lord Moyola, former Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 75; Mr John Raisen, former chairman, Shell UK, 69; Sir Richard Rongier, High Court Judge, 66; Mr Peter Snape MP, 56; The Hon. Nicholas Soames MP, 50; Mr Peter Temple-Morris MP, 60; Lord Wigoder QC, 77; Mr Alexander Wilson, librarian, 77; Mr Franco Zeffirelli, opera, theatre and film director, 75.

Anniversaries

Births: Thomas Campton, composer and poet, 1567; Charles Darwin,

naturalist, 1809; Abraham Lincoln, 16th US President, 1809; George Meredith, novelist, 1828. Deaths: Lady Jane Grey, Queen for nine days, executed 1553; Immanuel Kant, philosopher, 1804; Willie Langtry (Emily Charlotte Le Breton), actress, 1929. On this day: the French were defeated by the English at the Battle of the Herrings (Rouvray), 1429; 1,000 French troops made an unsuccessful invasion attempt on the coast of Pembrokeshire, 1797; Alexander Graham Bell's telephone was demonstrated between Boston and Salem, 1877. Today is the Feast Day of St Antony Kaules, St Elbevald of Lindisfarne, St Julian the Hospitaller, St Ludan, St Marina of Pelagia and St Melioris.

Lectures

National Gallery: Mari Griffith, "Horses (2)": the world's greatest animal painting; Ross Ballen's *Horse Race*, 1pm.
Tate Gallery: Sarah Whitfield, "Bonbard", 1pm.
Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford (Oxford Anatomy Lectures): Professor John Harris, "Clones, Genes and Immortality", 6pm.

Luncheons

HM Government
Mr George Robertson MP Secretary of State for Defence, was host at a luncheon yesterday given at Admiralty House, London SW1, in honour of Dr Janusz Onysiewicz, the Minister for National Defence of the Republic of Poland.

LAW REPORT: 12 FEBRUARY 1998

Father's devotion to his child was not sufficient

An application by an unmarried father for a parental responsibility order should not be granted where there were factors sufficiently adverse to the father, notwithstanding that he had shown commitment and attachment to the child.
Re H (A Minor) (Parental Responsibility): Court of Appeal (Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Henry and Lord Justice Potter) 29 January 1998

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appellant's appeal against the refusal of a county court judge to make a parental responsibility order in his favour.

The appellant was the father of the child but was not married to his mother. He had received a police caution for hitting one of the mother's children by a former relationship. When the appellant's rela-

tionship with the mother ended, the child would spend Friday nights with him.

After one such visit the child was found to have a number of bruises on his face and body, including bruising on the inner and outer ear and along the shaft of the penis and on the scrotum. He continued to have supervised contact with the appellant, who then applied for a parental responsibility order. The application was refused, and the appellant appealed.

Caroline Baker (Carrers, Judge Hill) for the appellant; *Robin Rowland (Challinors Lyon Clark, Birmingham)* for the respondent.

Lady Justice Butler-Sloss said that the appellant had denied having caused the injuries to the child, but the county court judge had concluded that he was not telling the truth. In deciding the issue

of parental responsibility, the judge had found that although the appellant was attached to the child, he had not shown the capacity to be responsible that was necessary for a parental responsibility order.

Section 4(1) of the Family Law Reform Act 1987 had, for the first time, given a father not married to the mother of his child the right to apply to the court for a parental rights order.

In Re H (Minors) (Local Authority: Parental Rights) [1991] Fam 151 Balcombe J had set out the following general principles to be followed in a parental rights application, whilst stating that the list was not intended to be exhaustive: 1) the degree of commitment which the father had shown to the child; 2) the degree of attachment which existed between the father and the child; and 3) the reasons of the father for applying for the order.

Section 3(1) of the Children Act 1989 had replaced the concept of parental rights by one of parental responsibility.

In Re G (A Minor) (Parental Responsibility) [1994] 2 FCR 1037 Balcombe LJ had applied the principles set out in his judgment in *Re H* to a parental responsibility application made under the 1989 Act.

Counsel for the appellant had relied on the three requirements set out by Balcombe J and had submitted that, once they had been established, the father was entitled to an order despite other factors to his detriment. She had further submitted that the judge had been wrong in principle to import into the criteria a requirement to act responsibly.

Those three requirements were, undoubtedly, the starting point for the making of an or-

der but it was clear that Balcombe J had not intended them to be the only relevant factors in considering a parental responsibility order. In any event such an approach would be contrary to section 1 of the 1989 Act, which made the welfare of the child paramount.

It was generally in a child's interests to know and have a relationship with his father, but if, in reviewing all the circumstances, the judge considered that there were factors adverse to the father sufficient to tip the balance against the order proposed, it would not be right to make the order, even if the three requirements could be shown.

In the present case the judge had been fully justified in finding that the appellant was not fit to have parental responsibility for the child.

— Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Bank warns of further rate rise to check inflation

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The Bank of England sprung a nasty shock on home buyers and the financial markets yesterday when it warned it would probably have to increase interest rates again to keep inflation on target.

Mervyn King, Deputy Governor, said monetary policy was more finely balanced now than at any time in the past five years. But he added: "The chances are we will need a further rise in interest rates."

Minutes of the January meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) showed that it had been split for the first time on the decision to leave the cost of borrowing unchanged, with three out of the eight members favouring an immediate increase. Given the analysis in yesterday's report, the vote was almost certainly split again at the meeting earlier this month.

The four internal Bank of England members of the MPC were, surprisingly, in the majority in favour of no change, along with DeAnne Julius, formerly an economist in industry. Mr King cautioned against over-dramatising the split, saying: "When policy is broadly on track there are likely to be small differences of opinion."

Individual members of the MPC will give evidence of their views to MPs next week. The unexpected hawkishness of the Inflation Report, which for the first time showed inflation would most likely be above its 2.5 per cent target in 18 months' time, outweighed encouraging news yesterday on earnings and unemployment.

The number of unemployment benefit claimants fell by 12,300 in January to just under 1.4m, the lowest since July 1980. This was a smaller fall than in recent months.

Meanwhile, the growth of underlying average earnings stayed

unchanged at 4.75 per cent in December, rather than increasing as expected. Employment in manufacturing fell by 17,000 during the same month.

Even so, the Inflation Report - which reflects the consensus view amongst MPC members - pointed to accelerating pay growth as one of the main inflationary dangers. "Earnings growth, especially in the private sector, will have to fall back if the inflation target is to be met," Mr King said.

"We will probably get the interest rate increase within the next couple of months," said Ken Watret, an economist at Paribas.

Yet some City experts stuck to their view that rates have already reached their peak. They were puzzled that the Inflation Report took such a tough line given that the MPC did not raise the cost of borrowing after its meeting last week.

But Mr King said the reason for not acting immediately was the great uncertainty about prospects for the economy. "It would not be an attractive proposition to raise rates now and have to cut them again in short order," he said.

Both business and union voices urged the Bank not to tighten policy any further at all, pointing to the fact that the pound leapt three pence to DM2.97 yesterday after the Bank's comments.

Ian Peters, deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "They are being understandably cautious, but our view is that there is no need to put rates up again." The Bank's statement had put unhelpful upward pressure on the pound, he said.

And John Monks, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress, expressed concern about the impact of the high pound and predicted that unemployment would be rising by the end of the year.

The Inflation Report said monetary policy was being pulled in opposite directions. On the one hand, despite the strong pound, inflation had only just reached its target, and earnings growth was climbing. On the other, the economy was starting to slow.

"The question is whether the timing and magnitude of the slowdown will be sufficient to prevent inflation turning up," the report said.

The report concluded that it probably would not. The inflation forecast was less optimistic than in November's report, with the MPC expecting it to lie above the 2.5 per cent target two years from now, and warned that "the balance of risks was on the upside".

The reason for the slightly gloomier prediction was because inflation had been higher than the Bank had expected since November. The strong exchange rate had put less downward pressure on retail prices so far than the Bank's economists had expected.

Tuesday's good news about inflation last month was not a surprise and would not have changed the forecast, Mr King said.

The report concluded that the Asian crisis was unlikely to have a big impact on the British economy, partly because lower interest rates in the US, Germany and Japan would offset the world slowdown to some degree.



Divided they stand: Monetary Policy Committee members are (clockwise from top left) Eddie George, the Governor; Sir Alan Budd; Willem Buiter; Charles Goodhart; Ian Plenderleith; Mervyn King, Deputy Governor; David Clementi; and DeAnne Julius

Decline in jobless figures may 'level off'

By Diane Coyle

The Government yesterday admitted that the rate of fall in unemployment might be starting to "level off". The warning came as new figures showed the number of people claiming unemployment benefit fell for the 23rd month running in January, but the decline of 12,300 to 1,398,500 was far less than expected. The jobless rate stayed unchanged at 5 per cent of the workforce, the lowest for 18 years.

As the Prime Minister launched the advertising campaign for the Government's "New Deal", the number of jobless claimants actually rose in the North-east, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

"There are signs that the rate of fall might be starting to level off," said Andrew Smith, Employment Minister, even as he welcomed the news of a further decline in the headline jobless figure.

The Office for National Statistics said the lower-than-expected drop last month could have been caused by claims not being processed over Christmas. It said the labour market continued to be "healthy", with the trend fall in unemployment in the range 20,000-40,000 a month.

Even so, yesterday's batch of figures contained other indications that the recovery in the jobs market is slowing. Most significant, underlying average earnings growth remained unchanged at 4.75 per cent.

The ONS pointed out that earnings were rising at an annual rate of 9.6 per cent in financial services, driven by a surge in City bonuses.

Incomes Data Services, which monitors pay deals, recently reported a surge in the number of settlements above 4 per cent. The Engineering Employers' Federation also recently expressed concern about higher settlements.

Eurorail in £2.3bn offer to rescue Channel link

By Michael Harrison

Eurorail, the consortium which lost the contest to build the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, last night offered to take over the project but indicated it would be delayed for four years and require £2.3bn in public subsidies.

The consortium also announced that HSBC, the owner of Midland Bank, had dropped out, agreeing to sell its 20 per cent stake to the other four shareholders. These are

Kvaerner, BICC, NatWest and Seaboard.

Keith Clarke, Eurorail's chief executive, said that if chosen to rescue the project, the 68-mile link would end at a new terminus at St Pancras. But he indicated it would be unlikely to be complete before 2007 - compared with the planned opening date of 2003.

The future of the rail link was thrown into disarray two weeks ago when London & Continental Railways said it could not

complete the project without an extra £1.2bn in subsidies.

LCR's winning bid in 1996 involved £1.4bn in subsidies and assumed that the Eurostar service would be carrying 10 million passengers by this year. Eurorail asked for £2.1bn in subsidies at February, 1996 prices, but its Eurostar traffic forecasts were much more conservative.

Mr Clarke said: "This project is too important to fail at this stage. It has major implications for London, the UK and for the

rest of Europe." But he added that the Government would have to commit funding early in the construction to encourage private sector funds into the project.

Eurorail would not start building the link or seek to raise private finance until Eurostar was firmly in the black. Eurostar's losses are currently running at £180m and it carried 6 million passengers last year.

The consortium's original bid put the total financing costs at just over £5bn and assumed that the

funding, minus the Government subsidy, would be 80 per cent debt and 20 per cent equity.

Mr Clarke said Eurorail had no interest in teaming up with any of LCR's shareholders, which include Virgin, Bechtel, National Express, SBC Warburg and the French railway SNCF.

Eurorail has a team of about 15 working on the project but will not submit formal proposals until LCR's 30-day deadline to come up with new funding arrangements expires on 27 February.

JBA profits warning sends tremors through IT sector

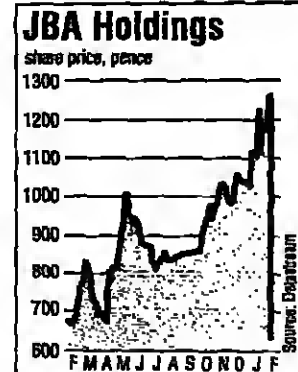
By Peter Thal Larsen

The Stock Exchange's newly formed information technology index was thrown into turmoil yesterday after JBA, the software developer, issued a shock profit warning which halved the value of the company and dragged down share prices across the sector.

Shares in JBA plunged 62p to 632.5p after the company warned that its profit for the year to 31 December 1997 was likely to be about £5m. Analysts had previously forecast that the company would make profits of about £15m.

The warning sent shock waves through the rest of the information technology (IT) sector. Shares in leading IT companies including CMG, FL, Logica, Misy and Sema all tumbled on the news.

Investors were particularly rattled by JBA's comment that the cost of hiring extra contract staff had contributed to the shortfall. In the past year strong demand for programmers, fuelled by the need to rid computers of the millennium bug, has forced up salaries across the IT sector, prompting fears that profits would be squeezed.



JBA said the profit shortfall was largely down to a sharp rise in product development costs, from £23m in 1996 to £36m last year. Only last year, the company, which specialises in software which helps companies plan their business processes, abandoned its practice of capitalising R&D costs to bring its accounting policies into line with US standards.

JBA also said it had lost several large product tenders to overseas competitors. "Four or five big deals didn't happen in areas where we can't differentiate our products from the competition," said chief executive Allan Vickery. "We made an error of judgement in a fast-moving world."

However, Mr Vickery also said the cost of hiring extra staff had made an impact. "The cost of IT contractors is completely out of control," he said, adding that JBA would be laying off 80 per cent of its contract staff in an attempt to cut costs.

The warning shocked many of JBA's followers in the City. The company has been one of the most consistent performers in the UK IT sector, with a steady record of rising profits.

Green light for Texas in Energy battle

By Chris Godsmark

A £4bn bid battle for Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, moved a step closer last night after US regulators cleared Texas Utilities, the Dallas-based power group, to launch a takeover offer. Texas said it had been given approval to bid for Energy Group following a meeting with the Texas Public Utility Commission, the state utility watchdog, on condition that it supplied the regulator with additional confidential documents. The group needed permission to invest 30 per cent or more of its capital overseas.

Meanwhile, Texas has stepped up its political lobbying drive in the UK in an attempt to avoid an investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission

(MMC). PacifiCorp, another US utility, was last year cleared to bid by the MMC and has launched a raised 765p share offer valuing Energy Group at £4.06bn.

Jarrell Gibbs, Texas' deputy chairman, met with Geoffrey Norris, special adviser to the Prime Minister, earlier this week and argued that a rival offer should not be referred to the MMC. Yesterday Mr Gibbs intensified the lobbying effort, meeting Martin O'Neill, chairman of the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee.

In a statement Texas confirmed it was still in discussions with Energy Group management, adding that any offer would have to "compare favourably" with PacifiCorp's. The comments lifted Energy Group shares 3.5p higher to 774p.

UBS staff go in first wave of bank job cuts

By Lea Paterson

UBS and SBC, the merging Swiss banks, yesterday began their extensive job-cutting programme. The axe will fall on 50 out of a total of 150 professional staff in UBS's London corporate finance department. Only a handful of their SBC counterparts face the sack.

The 50 staff who have failed to secure positions will not be made redundant right away. They will instead go into a "resources pool", from where they may be offered positions elsewhere in the bank. In reality most of the 50 employees are expected to be issued with redundancy notices.

About 3,000 City employees will be made redundant at the two banks in coming weeks. It had been widely anticipated UBS would bear the brunt of the cuts.

Malcolm LeMay of UBS, European co-head of corporate finance at the new bank, informed his staff of the scale of job cuts in a memo yesterday: "During the course of this week all London bankers will be informed individually whether they will be offered a role in Warburg Dillon Read [the new investment bank] ... around 70 per cent of our London-based bankers will be offered positions."

Mr LeMay said: "They are high-calibre people. I'm confident they will find other jobs, in the resources pool or elsewhere."

It is understood UBS plans to announce equity redundancies - where the bulk of cuts is expected - early next week.

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5807.90	-5.40	-0.10	5875.10	4189.10	3.22
FTSE 250	4991.90	-5.40	-0.09	4987.40	4384.20	3.19
FTSE 100 ex Energy	2874.90	-1.80	-0.06	2882.20	2075.70	3.22
FTSE 100 ex Tech	2804.95	-1.23	-0.05	2823.63	2065.07	3.21
FTSE 100 ex Health	2423.90	4.00	0.17	2420.20	2182.10	3.01
FTSE 100 ex Media	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
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FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
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FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
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FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
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FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
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FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Financials & Industrials & Consumer Goods & Retail	1315.00	1.90	0.15	1345.50	1225.20	3.45
FTSE 100 ex Services & Healthcare & Technology & Media & Telecom						

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Medeva needs to find a new star

One way to get Bill Bogie, chief executive of Medeva, animated is to enquire just what has happened to his group's share price. Claiming yesterday that he was determined not to mean about the dramatic slump in the value of the group, in the next breath Dr Bogie could not resist complaining that the City has got Medeva all wrong. After all, he argues, when Glaxo Wellcome warned that earnings would be flat for the next few years the shares held up, even before its merger talks with SmithKline Beecham. When Medeva makes a similar announcement the share price collapses.

To some extent the two companies' problems are similar. Glaxo's star ulcer treatment, Zantac, is coming off patent, while Medeva faces the introduction of generic competition for methylphenidate. Its main profit earner which is used to treat hyper-active kids.

But Medeva is no Glaxo. By virtue of its size is has nowhere near the number of drugs in its pipeline. Methylphenidate accounts for about a third of sales. Analysts believe sales of the treatment could halve over the next few years.

Prospects now hinge on finding a replacement. Medeva's main hope is heparine, a hepatitis B vaccine which could also be used to treat the disease. Other new products include a dry powder asthma inhaler and new improved forms of methylphenidate. If any of these come off in a big way, profit prospects will be transformed.

But we will not know until 1999 at the earliest. Until then, however hard the group tries, it is unlikely to make up the shortfall from the lost methylphenidate sales.

Even though Medeva has proved a solid earner, there is a case for it to be viewed more like a biotechnology stock. In other words, investing in the shares is a simple gamble on whether its drug development programme comes off.

That approach ignores the fact that, unlike biotech, Medeva is actually profitable and producing a reasonable cash flow. That cash flow could support new drug purchases and a 10 per cent share buyback, helping to underpin the share price.

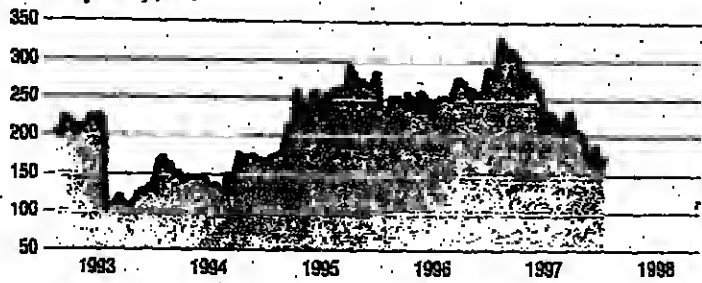
Medeva's 1997 profits rose to £111m, a rise of 7 per cent ignoring exceptional. But its shares fell 12p to 158p yesterday. ABN Amro Hoare Govett forecasts profits falling to £99m this year, then £107m in 1999, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio

Medeva: At a glance

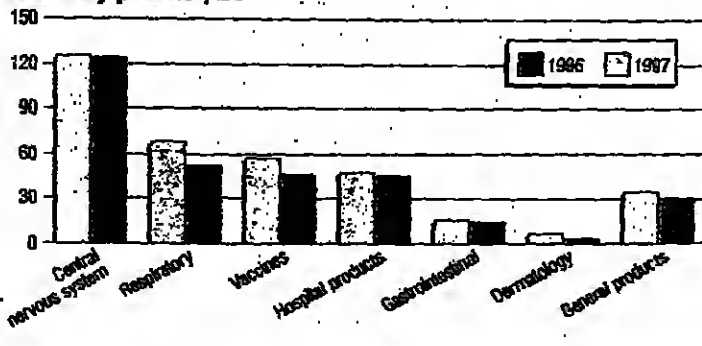
Market value: £562m, share price 158p (-12p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Turnover (£m)	200	240	256	332	355
Pre-tax profits (£m)	48.1	64.2	79.0	88.3	111
Earnings per share (p)	11.6	14.6	18.9	21.4	21.4
Dividends per share (p)	2.69	3.28	3.87	4.80	5.50

Share price, pence



Sales by product, £m



of 8.5, falling to 8. That looks very cheap compared to the wider pharmaceutical sector that trades on a multiple of at least 25 times earnings. Hold on.

Plenty for Sugar to do at Viglen

Viglen Technology, the personal computer group spun out of Alan Sugar's Amstrad last August, has not exactly covered itself in glory in its brief life on the market. The shares started trading at around 65p but collapsed in November following a profits warning and have been steadily drifting lower ever since. Yesterday they closed another 3p lower at 34.5p following disappointing half-year profits of £2.2m, down from £5.1m the previous year.

Viglen has been struggling with weak margins and the erosion of av-

erage selling prices. Meanwhile its retail operation, run in conjunction with Dixons, has not worked and sales were much lower than anticipated over Christmas.

Cash sales to small businesses have also been under pressure in a highly competitive market. Total sales were £5.7m lower than the previous year. All this has proved too much for Alan Sugar, who is to take the reins as executive chairman of the group and use his marketing know-how to stimulate sales. Mr Sugar, who owns 35 per cent of the group, is keen on pursuing links with schools and universities, which yields sales of £15.6m.

He is also keen to move away from just selling PCs towards a service-oriented group. The company has been building up its network computers business which installs systems in companies. A deal is expected next week.

But while Mr Sugar's entrepreneurial skills are well proven, the City expressed mixed feelings about his

plans for the group and the size of his stake. Mr Sugar feels the shares are grossly under-valued and a feeling persists in the City that he may try to take the group private.

This is not much comfort to shareholders, however, who have seen their investment lose almost half its value since August. On analysts' forecasts of £5m this year the shares trade on a forward rating of 12. Mr Sugar may produce some fireworks but for now that level looks about right.

Success proves costly for ITG

Investors may have warmed to information technology, but they're still a bit scared of the internet. For evidence, look no further than the recent drop in Internet Technology Group's share price. ITG, which crept onto the AIM market in 1996 through a complex reverse takeover, is currently signing up over 5,000 new subscribers a month to its internet dial-up service - each paying £10 a month.

It now has 60,000 paying customers, making it one of the three largest internet service providers in the country. But its share price has halved since April, when it briefly reached 110p.

Considering ITG lost £1.54m before tax last year (the previous year's figures mean little) that may not be a surprise. But, as most investors know, winning new customers costs money. Because it has to spend on advertising and support to attract new internet surfers, not to mention new modems and extra phone lines to connect them, ITG makes almost no money out of new customers in the first year it has them.

After that, however, they become very profitable. At the moment, ITG is signing up more new customers than it has existing ones. Sooner or later, however, that growth is bound to slow and then the profits will be substantial.

SG Securities, ITG's house broker, reckons the company will break even in 1999 and make profits of £4.4m the following year, by which time it should have over 250,000 customers. Its service targeting smaller businesses will swell those numbers even further.

Then there's Globalwave, its 75 per cent stake in a chip which can control computer payments, and could prove a real moneyspinner. ITG shares yesterday rose 1.5p to 54p, valuing the company at just £22.5m. Given the prospects for its internet business, and the added spice of a possible bid from a telecoms operator, the shares look cheap.

Monsoon float disappoints as shares dip below issue price

By Nigel Cope
Business Correspondent

The flotation of Monsoon, the women's fashion retailer, turned into a soggy affair yesterday when the company's shares fell below the issue price on their first day of dealings.

The shares, which were priced at 198p, dropped as low as 189p at once stage before recovering to 191.5p.

The float has provided Monsoon founder Peter Simon with an £88m windfall from the sale of 25 per cent in the company.

Mr Simon was travelling in India yesterday and was not available to comment on his company's disappointing debut. He and his family trusts will hold the remaining 75 per cent of the company.

"The fall is entirely logical," one dealer said. "I can't imagine there was that much de-

mand for a highly priced minority holding. But it's only day one."

One retail analyst added: "It was disappointing, as we expected. Some institutions were in to make a quick turn and they are not going to get it."

Nick Bubb, retail analyst at SG Securities, said: "We were surprised that they priced so aggressively and at that level it made the risk-reward ratio pretty unfavourable."

NatWest Securities, Monsoon's financial adviser, said that turnover in the shares was low, indicating that most institutions had bought the stock for the long term.

It was Monsoon's second attempt at a stock market listing. The company abandoned its float plans in 1996 because of concerns over the ultimate ownership of a Maltese registered trust which had a controlling stake in the business.

Monsoon faced an uphill battle to come to the market because of the volatile retail market, which had been hit by a series of disappointing Christmas trading statements, and the abandonment of its previous attempt at a listing.

NatWest said the company should be judged on its impressive record, which has seen it increase its profits in each of the last 12 years.

Monsoon, which specialises in distinctive designs featuring strong colours and an ethnic look, has 103 outlets in the UK.

It also has 181 branches of Accessorize, which sells accessories such as bags, hats and sunglasses.

Monsoon has recruited Graham Frost, deputy chief executive of GUS home shopping, as a non-executive director. This is thought to signal a move by Monsoon into mail order.

Alarm over increase in gas disconnections

British Gas disconnected almost 30,000 homes last year, double the number in 1995, according to figures released yesterday by the Gas Consumers Council, writes Chris Godsmark.

Sue Slipman, the GCC's director, said she was "extremely concerned" by the increase. She warned the company's policy appeared to have hardened since the roll-out of domestic competition.

British Gas said it was "catching up" with debt recovery, following a moratorium on disconnections in late 1996 while the company sorted out problems with a new national billing system.

A British Gas spokesman insisted the disconnection procedure had not changed and 54 per cent of homes contacted the company within 24 hours of being cut off. "These disconnections only happened because there was no contact from the customer."

Shandwick chief out in shake-up

Dermot McNulty, chief executive of Shandwick, the world's largest independent public relations firm, has lost his job after a wide-ranging shake-up of the group designed to slash costs, writes Andrew Yates.

Mr McNulty is on a two-year rolling contract paying £398,000 a year, meaning he could be in line for a payout of up to £800,000.

Shandwick has put aside £2.5m to pay off Mr McNulty, Colin Truster, the former head of the group's British business, and a number of regional managers and administration staff

who will also lose their jobs. The changes have been prompted by increasing pressure from shareholders, led by the UK Active Value Fund, which have become increasingly concerned about the group's ailing share price.

Shandwick said it was still in takeover talks with several rivals and expected an outcome, one way or another, within the next few weeks.

Pre-tax profits were flat at £9m (£9.2m) due to a disappointing performance from the UK division. Shares rose 1p to 53.5p.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
City Technology (F)	12.91m (8.9m)	-0.506m (3.48m)	-0.71p (4.79p)	nil
Robson Hale (F)	105.6m (95.61m)	16.12m (16.2m)	2.16p (3.21p)	1.75p (2.75p)
Intendant Technology (F)		-1.96m (-1.01m)	-0.51p (-1.11p)	nil
Medeva (F)	355.4m (331.8m)	110.9m (88.2m)	21.4p (20.8p)	5.5p (4.8p)
Shandwick (F)	173.8m (181.0m)	9.0m (8.22m)	4.9p (5.5p)	1.54p (1.43p)
Sallybank's Hedges (F)	382m and (338m)	84.5m and (88.2m)	73c (73c)	nil
Times Computers (F)	7.17m (6.72m)	0.40m (0.145m)	2.16p (1.03p)	nil
VCD (F)	45.24m (38.11m)	0.974m (0.723m)	5.41p (4.75p)	1.33p (1.35p)
Viglen Technology (F)	40.23m (47.83m)	2.25m (5.13m)	1.27p (-)	8.4p

(F) - Final (F) - Interim (S) - Split

THE INDEPENDENT
INDEPENDENT

£10 Conran lunch

The Independent and Independent on Sunday in association with Terence Conran are delighted to offer readers the opportunity to enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants throughout February for £10

Until Saturday February 28th, the following establishments are offering readers a two course lunch or early evening supper for just £10 per person.

How to Book

To participate in the offer simply collect one token (tokens will be printed every day until Saturday February 28th) and then telephone the restaurant of your choice quoting yourself as an Independent diner. On your arrival at the restaurant you should present your token in order to qualify for the offer. Each token is valid for a complete table booking. The tokens will be valid for one week only, and will be dated accordingly. To continue to participate in the offer, simply collect a token from the week in which you wish to dine. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

A special discount is available on selected items in the Bluebird and Le Pont de la Tour shops on presentation of the token.



MEZZO



Blue Print Café

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT

Valid between Saturday February 7th and Friday February 13th

Name _____

Address _____

This voucher entitles the holder and all members of their booking to participate in The Independent/Conran Restaurants £10 lunch offer

The Independent offer is available at the following restaurants:

Bluebird 350 King's Road, London, SW3 5UU
0171 559 1000
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Blue Print Café The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE
0171 378 7031
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Le Pont de la Tour Bar & Grill 36d Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE
0171 403 8403
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Mezzo 100 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3LE
0171 314 4000
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm
closed Saturday lunchtime, open Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Quaglinos 16 Bury Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6AL
0171 930 6767
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Zinc Bar & Grill 21 Heddon Street, London, W1R 7LF
0171 255 8899
The special 3 course menu is available between 12noon and 7pm
The Monday and Wednesday offer is extended until 11pm

The offer is available 7 days a week at all six restaurants
* Closed from 6pm on Sunday Offer not available after 6pm on February 14

Spring time in Paris from £85

Spring is nearly here, and what better way to shake off the winter blues than a trip to Paris. Whether you want to shop, dine, night-club, go sightseeing or simply take your time and relax, Paris is the perfect destination. With our special Springtime in Paris offer, you can go for a fraction of the price you would normally pay. All things considered wouldn't you rather be in Paris.

To make your booking simply call Driveline direct on 01707 222400.
The offer is valid for travel between 16th February and 30th April (excl 9-14 April)

THE OFFER

The price includes a return standard class Eurostar ticket from London Waterloo International (or Ashford International in Kent) to Paris Gare du Nord and one night sharing a twin/double room in one of five conveniently located hotels. For only £20 per person per night you can extend your stay to a two or three night break. Upgrade to a 3 star hotel from just £99 per person with extra nights from £27 per person per night.

Weekend travel: For travel outward and/or return travel on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday add £20 per person. For all travel in April add £15 per person. Child prices on request.

HOW TO BOOK

Phone Driveline on 01707 222 400 quoting The Independent/Eurostar offer promotion. Please have ready your 1st and 2nd choice of departure/return times and hotel accommodation. We recommend that you include a late morning departure/early afternoon return as one of your choices.

Payment can be made by Switch, Delta, Contact, Access or Visa. Travel Insurance is available at a special price of £10pp. Bookings must be received by Driveline at least 5 working days in advance of the requested date of travel. Within this period, where Driveline is able to accommodate your request, a £10 late booking fee will apply. All bookings will be verified by confirmation invoice and tickets are normally issued seven days prior to departure. If your departure date is within seven days, Driveline Europe will contact you to make suitable arrangements. A binding contract between you and Driveline Europe Ltd will come into existence when you have verbally confirmed your payment details to Driveline.

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Choose from the following departure times:
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Fewer services run Sat/Sun. *stops at Ashford, parking at Ashford £5 per day.

ACCOMMODATION

Campanile Montparnasse**
Located on avenue du Maine and close to Galleries Lafayette

Campanile Bastille**

Located in the centre of Paris, close to the historic Marais Quarter

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Situated on the left bank at Place d'Italie within walking distance of the Latin Quarter

Clarins Paris Alasia**

South of Montparnasse near Porte d'Orleans

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All bookings are subject to availability. All travel must be completed by 30/04/98. The offer is available to readers aged 18 years or over. You will require a valid EC passport and any necessary visas. Tickets for Eurostar train services are issued subject to the conditions set out in Eurostar's Conditions of carriage, copies of which are available on request. Readers should be aware that no changes or amendments are permitted with this offer. Lost or stolen tickets are strictly non refundable. Departure times are approximate and subject to change. Eurostar check in closes 30 minutes before departure. This offer cannot be combined with any other offer. This offer is valid for a minimum of two adults sharing a room. Paris tourist tax is approx. 6FF per day. At all times check your tickets and accommodation voucher carefully. In accordance with the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours regulations (1992), Driveline Europe Ltd operate a Clients' Trust account where all moneys paid to them by clients will be held in a separate bank account until the return date as confirmed by Driveline has passed.



OUTLOOK ON THE SPLIT IN THE RANKS OF THE MPC. PROFIT WARNINGS IN THE SOFTWARE SECTOR, AND EUROPEAN MERGERS POLICY

Eddie George sprouts wings; now why's that?

"Confused? We are". That was the conclusion of one City circular analysing the Inflation Report yesterday. The MPC has left interest rates unchanged for the past two months, while the constant drip of statistics and surveys has made it pretty plain that the economy is starting to cool off. There are uncertainties – mainly about pressures in the jobs market – but most Bank-watchers had concluded that interest rates were now as high as they were going to get this business cycle.

Here is the puzzle. Yesterday's report announced that rates will probably have to climb further because inflation is likely to be above target in two years' time, the Bank's policy horizon. What's more the vote at January's MPC meeting, and presumably February's, was split – but the split was five to three in favour of no change rather than an increase.

There is a puzzle within the puzzle too. The four-strong Bank team on the committee was on the side of the doves, quite the reverse of what everybody would have expected. Mervyn King, the human face of the Inflation Report, provided a partial explanation of these conundrums. As he pointed out, the decision genuinely is finely balanced and reasonable people – like the MPC's members – can be expected to disagree. The minutes of January's MPC meeting make it clear that there were actually more than two views, with some members holding to more than one view. One argument was that disappointing inflation figures and growing pay pressures warranted an immediate rate rise. Another was that weaker demand at

home and the impact of Asia meant a move was unjustified.

In between was the view that there was so much uncertainty about which set of risks was greater that there was no option but to wait and see. In a yes-or-no vote, the wait-and-see camp (presumably the four internal Bank members) cannot be distinguished from the no-change camp (DeAnne Julius).

As to whether it was consistent to not raise rates while simultaneously predicting inflation would probably miss its target in future, Mr King said yes, because of the degree of uncertainty. There was too great a danger of having to reverse an early rate increase. All convincing stuff but it is hard to avoid the suspicion that there was some Bank realpolitik involved as well, with Eddie George and the rest of the Bank team unexpectedly sprouting wings to perch beside the well-known dove on the Committee, Ms Julius. Mr George does, after all, still have a second term of office to win. But no. Surely not!

If a bit of inconsistency is the price of transparency in the new monetary arrangements, it is a price worth paying.

Hard landing for software shares

Whoops. Shares in JBA Holdings have nearly doubled over the last year. Yesterday they gave it all back, proving yet again the obvious truism that the higher you climb the further you have to fall. The stock mar-

ket doesn't take kindly to had ows from companies trading on more than 40 times forecast earnings, and rightly so, but whether it was also justified in marking down the rest of the high flying computer software and IT industry is another thing. Is this sub sector of the stock market just another speculative bubble waiting to burst, or can these heady valuations be justified?

JBA is hamming some of its problems on the widespread and well publicised difficulty in the IT market of getting suitably qualified staff at reasonable salaries. But actually the fact that JBA has ended up paying through the nose for its staff seems to be largely down to mismanagement. JBA has been pouring money into product development, but the enhanced revenue which was to pay for it failed to materialise.

The company also has a history of this sort of thing. Quite recently it caused another bout of the jitters among investors by failing to prepare accounts on time. This was a danger over adequately explained and it may be that some of the accounting changes JBA was forced to introduce at that time are coming home to roost. Under the old methods it would simply have capitalised the extra development costs. But JBA is now under American standards and these costs must be written off as they are incurred. So JBA may be an isolated case after all.

That doesn't mean the sector isn't dangerously overvalued. Some parts of it probably are. The general rule of thumb should be that if a stock is trading in line

with or below its American peers, then it's probably alright, though it will inevitably suffer the same volatility of the US high tech sector. In many cases, however, European IT stocks have begun to trade at a premium. This is particularly the case in the service part of the market, a phenomenon that tends to be justified on grounds that the opportunities for outsourcing and the like are much better in Europe than the US because we start from so far behind.

Unfortunately, this service part of the market is also the most likely to be hit by very high rates of IT wage inflation. And can better growth opportunities in Europe really justify the fact that Sema Group trades on a higher multiple than that of Computer Sciences Corporation in the US, even though that company is now the subject of a \$9bn hostile takeover bid? This seems doubtful.

When Brussels knows best

On 1 March another slice of decision-making power will be taken away from the European Union's individual member states and handed over to Brussels. From that date, the EC will assume the authority for vetting all mergers involving companies with a combined turnover of more than 2.5bn euros (£1.6bn). The previous threshold was 5bn euros.

Ordinarily, such a flow of power away from national authorities into the labyrinthine

of the Berlaymont building would be a cause for concern. For one thing, it runs directly counter to the principle of subsidiarity – the idea that decision making is best devolved to member states wherever possible.

On this occasion, however, there will be dancing in the streets of the City, even among its not inconsiderable corps of Europhobes. The reason is that decisions on a great many more mergers will be taken out of the UK political arena and judged solely on their impact on competition within the single European market.

Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, has pledged publicly that Board of Trade will continue to be the overriding consideration driving mergers policy. But it is not for nothing that she is now known as Mrs Blockit. The suspicion is that a great many other factors are privately taken into account – such as jobs, regional policy and the origins of the bidder. The decision to refer PacificCorp's bid for Energy Group, for instance, had nothing to do with competition issues.

The number of bids that already escape UK scrutiny may be small but they are also the biggest. Mr Beckett would dearly have loved to get her hands on Guinness-GrandMet but was powerless. Likewise she will have to sit by while Glaxo-SmithKline goes to the EC's mergers task force. From 1 March, the trickle will turn into a river, if not a flood, since £1.6bn of combined sales is scarcely a demanding hurdle these days. It is to see Brussels subsuming more and more power but it surely cannot be a bad thing if it stops meddling, self-interested politicians from pursuing unsafe policy.

Glaxo and SmithKline will keep both research centres

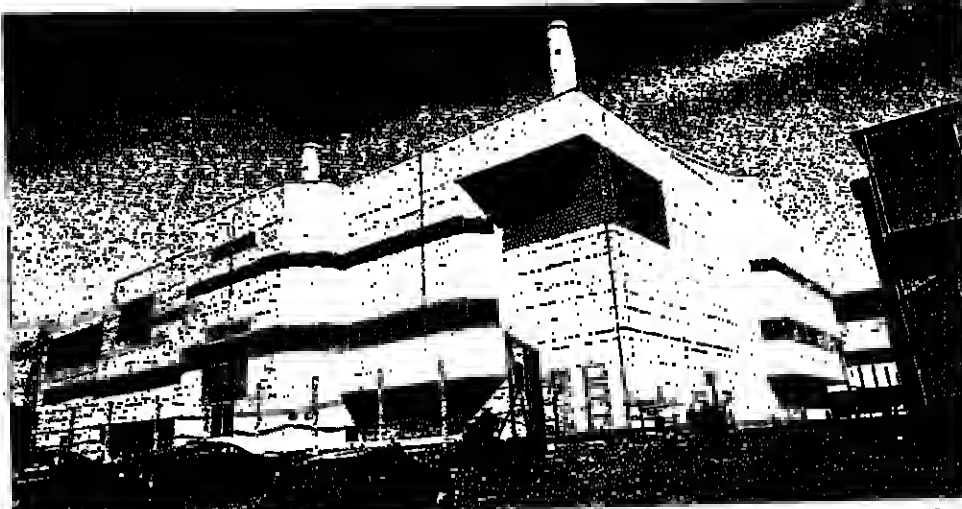
By Andrew Yates

Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham will keep open both their research and development headquarters in the event of a merger of the two companies, according to City sources.

The decision comes amid growing concerns from senior Government ministers that the deal would lead to substantial job losses amongst skilled scientists, causing long term damage to the British economy.

By not closing the research and development complexes the drugs giants hope to placate the Government's fears and ease the path for the £100bn-plus merger.

The deal would have to be sanctioned by EU competition authorities. The UK authorities are likely to launch their own in-depth investigation and could lobby Brussels for specific undertakings on research and development jobs and expenditure. The decision on the R&D centres will safeguard thousands of jobs. Glaxo employs 1,700 people at its main research facility at Stevenage in Hertfordshire, which was opened at a cost of £700m in 1995. SmithKline employs



Staying: The Glaxo Pharmaceuticals building in Stevenage, where top scientists work

2,000 people at its own £250m site in Harlow, Essex. There had been fears that one of the companies' flagship R&D sites would be shut to cut costs.

Instead Glaxo and SmithKline are planning to eliminate any duplication in the R&D already conducted at the two sites. They will then use the spare capacity to create a new drugs pipeline and concentrate on new development areas.

However, there could be job losses at some of the smaller R&D facilities the two groups

run around the country as Glaxo-SmithKline seeks to rationalise and cut costs. Together, the merged group would employ more than 6,500 R&D people. Thousands of UK manufacturing and administration jobs are also likely to go.

The decision was welcomed by MSF, the white collar science union. Paul Talbot, national secretary for the pharmaceutical industry, said: "This is good news for the employees. There were real fears that the Stevenage site would be closed. But

that doesn't mean to say there will not be extensive rationalisation elsewhere. We need more information, which the companies are refusing to give."

There was an uproar when Glaxo closed down Wellcome's research facility at Beckenham with the loss of 1,000 jobs, after winning a hostile takeover bid three years ago. Glaxo and SmithKline are also preparing to give up some of their best selling drugs to get the merger past the competition authorities.

Chiroscience and BMS in cancer deal

By Andrew Yates

Chiroscience yesterday teamed up with Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS), the US pharmaceuticals giant, to develop a potential new blockbuster treatment for cancer. It is the biggest deal the UK biotechnology group has ever made and its shares closed 4.5p higher at 266p.

The deal pits Chiroscience head-to-head with British Biotechnology which is currently testing marimastat, its cancer remedy that could also revolutionise the treatment of the disease.

BMS is already the biggest supplier of cancer treatments in the world with annual sales of \$1.8bn (£1.1bn) in a market worth \$7bn. Its biggest seller is Taxol, which acts to kill cancerous cells. Other treatments in the market use hormone therapy to eradicate such things as breast cancer.

But Chiroscience's new compound, like marimastat, would act to inhibit what are known as metalloproteinases, which have been linked with the spread of cancer around the body. Such drugs could be used to complement existing remedies or to stop infection after operations or a course of radiotherapy. It could eventually replace other remedies and the potential market for such drugs could be huge. Analysts esti-

mate that if they proved successful, they could become \$1bn sellers in a market that is growing all the time.

Dr Andy Richards, director of business development at Chiroscience, said yesterday: "This could add a whole new layer of treatment to the market. If it is successful there is no reason why it could not replace existing treatment. Then it could have sales of over \$1bn."

BMS has acquired the worldwide rights for two of Chiroscience's leading anti-cancer compounds – known only as D2163 and D1927. In return analysts believe that the group is paying £5m up front to Chiroscience. The UK group can also expect to receive up to £50m if it makes it through clinical testing and BMS will put up the tens of millions of pounds it will take to get the drug through the development stages.

Chiroscience estimates that it could receive a royalty of more than 10 per cent if the drug goes on the market.

Chiroscience's new drugs could be available by 2002 if they get through clinical testing, but tests for marimastat are more advanced and the company will reveal important trial results next year. The two groups also face competition from other major pharmaceutical groups around the world who are investing huge sums to find a cure for cancer.

Debonair chief protests about BA to Brussels

Franco Mancassola, chief executive of the Debonair airline, met with competition chiefs in Brussels yesterday to express his concerns about Go. British Airways' new low-cost carrier. "We understand that BA is guaranteeing the leases for [Go's] new aircraft. That is not something a start-up can do," said Mr Mancassola. "They are exercising their dominant position and this abuse is of great concern to us."

Credit Suisse pension plan

Credit Suisse, the bank, and Winterthur, the insurer, yesterday announced their first UK joint venture since merging last year. They will launch a new personal pension plan, which will be managed by Credit Suisse, but will be marketed by Winterthur UK, a market leader in UK self-invested pension plans (SIPPs).

Lenders scrap indemnities

Mortgage providers are rushing to scrap controversial mortgage indemnity charges in the wake of a Halifax initiative last week. Both Woolwich and NatWest Mortgage Services yesterday said they would not charge for the indemnity for any loans up to 90 per cent of the value of the house. Northern Rock also stopped the charge on Tuesday for loans up to 85 per cent. The charges are controversial because the customer pays to protect the lender against losing money if the house is repossessed.

Small firms 'need boost'

Tax credits to encourage greater investment in small and medium-sized companies, an increase in the VAT threshold to £100,000 and a simplification of business taxes were yesterday called for by the British Chambers of Commerce. The Chambers said the Chancellor should use next month's Budget to correct under-investment in SMEs by allowing firms which are not yet profitable to claim tax breaks against other liabilities such as PAYE and National Insurance contributions.

PIA inquiry into draw-down pensions may reveal mis-selling

By Andrew Verity

Financial regulators yesterday completed the first stage of an inquiry into the sale of hundreds of millions of pounds of investment products which may have been mis-sold.

The Personal Investment Authority said it had collected responses from almost all providers of the income draw-down plans, which offer pension savers the chance to draw money from their fund without buying an annuity.

Industry sources expect the inquiry to reveal strong evidence that financial advisers had a massive incentive to sell

income draw-down products, which depend for their result on the stock market, rather than an annuity, the safer alternative.

Data from individual life offices disclosed to the regulator shows that advisers could receive up to £5,600 in commission for persuading an investor to put £100,000 in a draw-down product. If the investor had bought an annuity, the commission on £100,000 would have been less than £200.

Joe Palmer, the PIA's chairman, said earlier this year that commission on draw-down products "may give rise to biased advice which we will be

investigating further in 1998. The commission on pension income draw-down is considerably higher than that available on annuities."

Data disclosed to the regulator shows that advice on buying an income draw-down policy from a Norwich Union representative costs £10,360 – most of which will come from the investor's savings. Advice on buying an annuity through the same channel is just £259.

Life insurers who provide income draw-down products have become increasingly frustrated that little has been done to protect consumers from over-zealous selling by com-

mission-hungry sales people. The product is thought to be the most complicated investment product ever introduced. With its popularity boosted by rock-bottom annuity rates of less than 7 per cent, more than £800m a year has flowed into the product.

John Morel, who lobbied for the products to be introduced as head of marketing at Winterthur Life, said: "I've become increasingly disappointed at what's happening in draw-down since it was introduced." He added that attempts to persuade regulators to ensure that the advisers selling it were specially qualified had been rebuffed.

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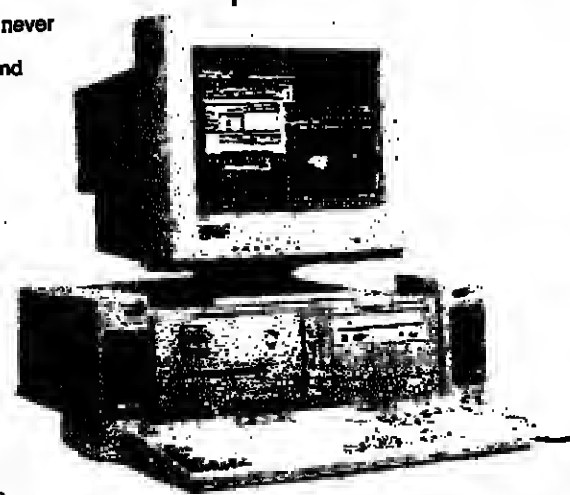
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A buzz of telecoms rumours livens up a dull day

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

Even on a dull day telecoms continued to mesmerise the stock market. The suspicion that corporate action will shortly emerge kept many of the leading players on the high wire, with a range of sometimes wild rumours buzzing around.

Orange led the way. The mobile telephone group gained 9.5p to a 345p peak ahead of the expected British Aerospace sale of its 21 per cent stake. A Continental group is thought to be the most likely buyer.

Cable & Wireless was under the influence of keen anticipation, with Hong Kong developments and the possibility of a BT bid pushing the shares up 12p to a 642p high, although BT could only manage to dial a 3.5p advance to 569.5p.

Vodafone was another ringing a new record, up 6p to 520p. There were vague suggestions that it could put Ilex, the struggling radio

telephone group, out of its misery with an 85p share bid; the alleged target responded with a 6.5p fall to 72p.

Securicor, 3.5p firmer at 367.5p, was helped by a revival of rumours that it is near to selling its 40 per cent stake in the Celtel mobile telephone group to BT, which would, the story, clear the way for Rentokil, up 12.75p to 292.75p, to strike at Securicor.

Rentokil is immersed in bid rumours these days. The environmental and property services group was last week linked with the Compass contract catering group and was yesterday said to be looking at a Danish company, International Service System, a cleaning and maintenance services operation.

Footsie, at one time up 33.4 points, ended off 5.4 at 5,607.9 in rather lacklustre trading. The rest of the market was a little more responsive with the

supporting indices edging to new highs.

A recurrence of interest rate worries and New York's inability, during London hours to build on its peak were the main inhibiting influences.

Still Kingfisher, running the Woolworths and Superdrug chains, was untroubled as a cheerful trading statement hoisted a 1.100p target. Salomon Smith Barney moved to 1.100p, partly on the back of B&Q's strong position in the robust do-it-yourself market and the prospects for Darty, the French chain. SG Securities and Morgan Stanley had already moved to 1.100p and 1.105p respectively. The shares rose 28p to 1.04p.

IT shares lost some of their exuberance on the heels of JBA and, less directly, City Technology. JBA almost halved to 632.5p after warning profits would be around £5m against hopes of

up to £16m. City Tech, a gas sensors group, returned from suspension at 180p, off 28.5p. US problems forced a £5m provision and axing of the interim dividend.

It was enough to prompt a 45p fall to 1.315p by Logica and 45p to 2.195p by Missys. Head's, the furniture retailer, rose 10p to 182.5p on a cheerful trading statement but Monsoon, the fashion chain, endured a surprisingly ragged debut, closing at 191.5p against the 198p placing.

Body Shop International's discomfort over the departure of its US chief continued, with the shares off 4.5p to 111p.

Takeover bids still flowed. British Dredging jumped 26.5p to 152.5p after an approach prompting one market man to observe that if such a bewhiskered old candidate can get a bid then "this market must be on bid alert". Property group Five Oaks hardened 5.25p to 39p as Milner Estates, up 2.5p at 317.5p offered an agreed £40.5m. Chesterton, the property agency, was suspended at 36p (up 3p); it has agreed a reverse takeover by rival Summit. But Cookson lost some of Tuesday's speculative rise, off 7.5p to 209.5p.

Granada, commencing a series of investment presentations, edged forward 3.5p to 908.5p and Reuters improved 7p to 579p ahead of an in-

vestment dinner hosted by Henderson Crosswhite for 16 fund managers.

Some utilities firmed as Robert Fleming suggested the current government review could add 10 per cent to the sector by making regulation more predictable and "less of a political football". The investment house favours National Power and United Utilities.

Little Criterion Properties rose 9p to 88.5p after forging a pact with a US investment company Oaktree which has funds of \$10bn. The partnership intends to invest in high yielding office properties.

Capital Industries edged forward 1.5p to 130p. There is talk that Rutland Trust could sell its 39 per cent stake in the laminated paper and foil container group to a US company, thereby triggering a bid. Rutland's yearly shareholders meeting takes place tomorrow.

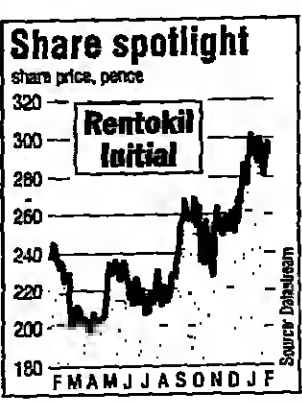
Celsis International, the hygiene kits group, fell 7.5p to 70.5p, lowest since 1994.

Bear raider Simon Cawllwell, the so called Evil Knevil, has let it be known he has taken a short position in the shares. He says they are worth 40p.

But Celsis came out fighting. In November it claimed it was on track to make profits in its second half year which ends next month. Chairman Jack Rowell said: "We are doing nothing out of step in our drive towards the end of the financial period".

Tadpole Technology rose 7.5p to 22p. Stockbroker Colin Blackburn has made a quick turn. On Monday it was announced he picked up 3.1 per cent, probably at around 10 pence.

DW Hankinson, former chief of householder Fairbairn, sold his 8.83 per cent stake at the market price, 32p.



Share Price Data
Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve month dividend paid as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding extraordinary items but including dividends. Other financial data are shown where available. A full list of companies is available on page 10. Source: Bloomberg.

12 week										32 week									
High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Chg	Yld	P/E	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Chg	Yld	P/E
Alcoholic Beverages																			
100	100	100	100	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	100	100	100	100	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
101	101	101	101	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	101	101	101	101	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
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106	106	106	106	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	106	106	106	106	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
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158	158	158	158	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	158	158	158	158	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
159	159	159	159	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00	159	159	159	159	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	10.00
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161	161	161	161	0.00															

Markets are soaring, profits are high — where is the investment boom?



DIANE COYLE
ON WHY
BUSINESSES
SEEM TO SPEND
SO LITTLE

One of the perennial concerns about the performance of the British economy is the lack of investment. This has been particularly acute during the present recovery because the rise in investment spending during the upswing has been far smaller than it was during previous cycles.

The Pre-Budget Report published by the Treasury last November picked out the problem. It said: "Our record on investment has been poor by international standards." And it added one possible explanation: "The UK's track record of macro-economic instability has discouraged long-term planning and investment."

This is a possibility that has concerned the Bank of England for some time. For one thing, if there is too little investment in new capacity in some sense, the economy will run into the inflationary huffers sooner rather than later. For another, the Bank had hoped that the introduction of inflation targeting after the September 1992 exchange rate mechanism crisis would have started to improve the record of macroeconomic instability. Ever since that point, in fact, the economy has been expanding much more steadily than was the norm in previous recoveries.

In the Bank's Quarterly Bulletin, published today, one of its

economists, Simoo Whitaker, takes a closer look at the recent investment performance. It notes that since the recovery began, starting in early 1992, total investment has declined as a share of GDP. About one-third of the relative weakness is due to low investment by government, but the private sector has accounted for two-thirds. A drop in residential construction since the property price collapse explains a further one-third of this. But the rest is down to business investment, which has risen far less than in the 1981-1986 upswing, as the chart shows.

Most of the attention about the issue of missing investment has focused on manufacturing, but the Bank's breakdown of the data immediately turns up two facts that challenge the received wisdom. One is that within business, it is services and utilities that explain the relative weakness; and as the utilities enjoyed a privatisation-related investment boom, the more recent weakness is perhaps not surprising. The other is that business investment as a share of GDP might have grown slowly during this recovery but it started at a high level and its share is now above the long-term average.

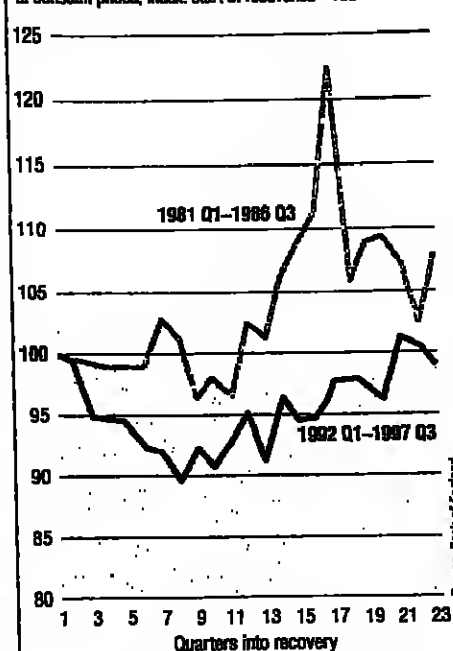
Mr Whitaker goes on to ask what it is that determines this share. Why do businesses want to invest as much — or as little — as they do? Did they start this recovery with "too much" capital already, explaining why investment has climbed so slowly since 1992? He also looks at whether investment is mis-measured.

The Bank's findings are that, on balance, the after-tax cost of investing in new capital has been lower during this recovery than the previous one. The reduction of tax allowances for investment spending in 1984, phased in over two years, raised the tax rate by more than subsequent reductions in corporation tax have reduced it. But the pre-tax cost of finance has probably been well below its level during the 1970s and 1980s.

This does assume that there has been no change in the average life of a capital asset,

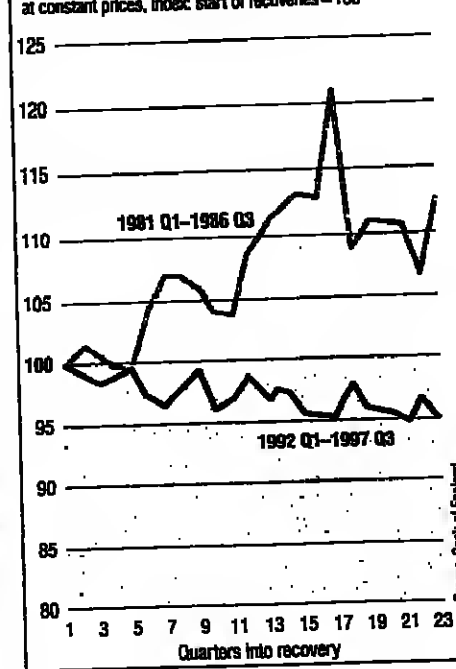
Business investment/ GDP in recoveries

at constant prices, index start of recoveries=100



Whole-economy investment/ GDP in recoveries

at constant prices, index start of recoveries=100



which might not be true. The growing importance of information technology, which has a short life, in services in particular would imply investment had become more expensive. But equally, the price of IT goods has probably been over-estimated because they are falling so rapidly alongside quality improvements, and that would work the other way.

So investment has probably been less costly than in the past. At the same time, stock market values have soared and profitability has been high. All of these should have encouraged an investment boom. The paper identifies three reasons why the boom never materialised. One is that companies entered the 1990s with an unprecedented burden of debt. Much of the profit of British business during the early stages of the recovery went to repay debt and restore balance sheets to health. A second is the high-dividend payout ratio, which has tended to reduce retained earnings. Until Gordon Brown's corporate tax reforms, the UK tax system en-

couraged high dividends to shareholders. This might change in future thanks to the abolition of advance corporation tax, as pension funds will no longer get a refund on ACT paid on dividends on their behalf.

But the third possibility is simply that the statistics have under-recorded investment spending by overstating the prices used to convert actual cash spent into "real" terms. This type of mis-measurement would be worse when prices were falling, as they have been for some types of investment good. Certainly, business surveys of investment intentions have been far out of kilter with the official statistics — especially in services — for at least a year. In addition, the ONS has found that over a 10-year period its statisticians tend to underestimate investment at first and revise it up significantly later. Since 1986 the average upward revision in the year-on-year growth rate of total investment has been 2.6 percentage points.

Finally, the Bulletin article observes, spending on software

will not be included in the definition of investment for statistical purposes until later this year. Even before panic about the year 2000 problem and converting financial computer systems for the euro set in, software spending has been a huge item for many businesses. The US has long included software within the investment umbrella in its figures.

Is it safe to conclude that Britain has no investment problem after all? It is unlikely that Mr Brown would agree. The Government's ambitions for creating well-paid and meaningful jobs for more people depend to a large extent on the growth in capacity, whether in manufacturing or services, there is unlikely to be enough jobs growth.

And expanding and re-evaluating the nation's capital stock, implementing new technologies, is the path to improving productivity and, ultimately, levels of prosperity. The moral is that we might have had more of it than we thought, but this is one good thing you can't have too much of.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



To the Tate for the launch of the Bonnard exhibition with my good friend Nick Serota, director of the gallery. And what a gathering of London's glitterati it was.

The show featuring the French painter is sponsored by Ernst & Young, who managed to get their logo plastered over just about everything except the paintings. The same accountancy firm paid for the Cézanne exhibition at the Tate two years ago, and they assure me their art sponsorship will continue after the proposed merger with KPMG.

Amongst the throng guzzling the canapés were Bernard Levin, the venerable columnist, and Alfred Brendel, the famous pianist and leading interpreter of Beethoven's sonatas. Such was the crush that I nearly bumped into Michael Palin, of *Around the World* fame, only to ricochet into Tim Rice, the distinguished lyricist, looking very tall and talking very loudly about his next trip to the US.

Also there was George Mallinckrodt, president of Schroders, looking his usual urbane self, as well as the novelist AS Byatt. All in all there was little time left to look at the pictures. I hear that Ernst & Young are so keen on the exhibition that they have painted their staff mini-buses on the top with a green Bonnard signature, and a matching orange on the side.

Not to be outdone in the aesthetic stakes, Alan Sugar, the Spurs boss and founder of Amstrad, is appearing in the theatre. He is set to tread the boards at the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds, this very afternoon.

Mr Sugar will be addressing students from the Leeds area on the "values of business enterprise," in a scheme suggested to him by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, and Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General. Mr Sugar will be taking his show on the road to schools in Hackney, Norwich and Birmingham, with sponsorship from Lloyds Bank.

"I started out in business as a kid, and earned a living as a kid, doing things that youngsters in Yorkshire can do there today," he says. "I want to burn the spirit of entrepreneurship into them, not to lecture them but actually show them that business can be fun, that hard work

can be fun and that the rewards of hard work and common sense can be even more fun."

The indefatigable Mr Sugar also had time yesterday to take over as executive chairman at Viglen Technology, the PC company where he is the principal shareholder.

The present chairman of Viglen, Michael Beckett, said he will now become a non-executive director. Mr Beckett said Mr Sugar intends to take the company "aggressively forward". Get your shin pads on...

If getting the lowdown on business enterprise from Mr Sugar doesn't grab you, then how about getting your arm around Lord Dickie Attenborough? This mouth-watering prospect is held out as a fringe benefit by the Criterion Theatre, in London's Piccadilly Circus, which is selling £750,000 of shares over the next 40 days to private investors.

If you should subscribe to the issue, Sally Greene, the founder and managing director of the Criterion, promises you invitations to all the first nights, the chance to mingle with the cast, and a general entree to the thespian world. Lord Attenborough is chairman of the company, founded three years ago, while David Sneath is a director and Jeremy Irons and Dame Judi Dench are consultants. So invest in this company and you'll never have trouble name-dropping again.

If you're interested, ring Sally Greene or Michael Morris on 0171 839 8811. The minimum investment is £1,000 for 1,000 shares, and investing over £4,000 will get you a Criterion Investors' Card, offering discounts at all sorts of theatres and events.

Ms Greene says she wants to bring the excitement back to the theatre, with work by up and coming playwrights. She's currently attempting to lure Gerard Depardieu to appear. Why not invite Mr Sugar along to do his turn?

There's a very unkind rumour going around the City that the reason Lord Wolfson of Grand Universal Stores (GUS) hasn't launched his offer document for Argos yet, following last Tuesday's hostile bid, is that he's using GUS's White Arrow parcel delivery subsidiary to deliver the document. (I couldn't possibly say where the rumour came from...)

White Arrow was featured in a *Watchdog* TV programme on 29 January, in which presenter Anne Robinson recounted the story of a parcel handled by the company apparently taking two and a half months to be delivered from Poole in Dorset to Reading. Considering the Poo Express in the Old West managed 200 miles a day, this isn't great going.

All very unkind, as I said.

Peter Rodgers, a former financial editor of this very organ and now Secretary of the Bank of England, brought a touch of *Top of the Pops* to the Bank's presentation of its Inflation Report yesterday, with an array of coloured lights "not unlike an early Pink Floyd gig", I am told.

Mervyn King presented the data behind the bank of red and purple lights. The presentation is now transmitted live on Reuters TV, so of course Mervyn started: "Welcome to all our viewers." All they need now is Pan's People.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
UK	100.00	2.4044	2.3985	0.0828	0.0834
Australia	24.073	20.848	20.779	12.781	12.789
Canada	61.293	60.863	60.679	32.535	32.535
Denmark	23.448	23.428	23.207	14.834	14.834
ECU	16.333	16.333	16.333	16.333	16.333
France	6.5596	6.5596	6.5596	6.5596	6.5596
Germany	2.3636	2.3636	2.3636	2.3636	2.3636
Greece	48.372	47.949	47.949	27.388	27.388
Hong Kong	7.7564	7.7564	7.7564	7.7564	7.7564
Italy	20.361	20.361	20.361	20.361	20.361
Japan	161.01	161.01	161.01	161.01	161.01
South Africa	20.155	20.155	20.155	20.155	20.155
Spain	166.38	166.38	166.38	166.38	166.38
Sweden	13.460	13.460	13.460	13.460	13.460
Switzerland	1.4563	1.4563	1.4563	1.4563	1.4563

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
Argentina	162.33	162.33	162.33	162.33	162.33
Brazil	12.935	12.935	12.935	12.935	12.935
China	8.2754	8.2754	8.2754	8.2754	8.2754
Czech Rep	55.491	55.491	55.491	55.491	55.491
Hong Kong	7.7564	7.7564	7.7564	7.7564	7.7564
India	33.750	33.750	33.750	33.750	33.750
Indonesia	1535.5	1535.5	1535.5	1535.5	1535.5
Israel	1.8356	1.8356	1.8356	1.8356	1.8356
Malaysia	4.0492	4.0492	4.0492	4.0492	4.0492
Nigeria	14.949	14.949	14.949	14.949	14.949

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Change	Fund	Unit Price	Change
Admiral Growth Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide	20.00	0.00
Admiral Income Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Investment Portfolio	20.00	0.00
Admiral Bond Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Growth	20.00	0.00
Admiral Equity Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Income	20.00	0.00
Admiral Global Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Real Estate	20.00	0.00
Admiral International Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Technology	20.00	0.00
Admiral Pacific Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Utilities	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Healthcare	20.00	0.00
Admiral Europe Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Energy	20.00	0.00
Admiral US Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Chemicals	20.00	0.00
Admiral Japan Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Materials	20.00	0.00
Admiral Australia Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Telecommunications	20.00	0.00
Admiral Canada Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Media	20.00	0.00
Admiral New Zealand Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Entertainment	20.00	0.00
Admiral South Africa Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Consumer Goods	20.00	0.00
Admiral Middle East Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Industrial	20.00	0.00
Admiral Russia Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Transportation	20.00	0.00
Admiral Latin America Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Aerospace	20.00	0.00
Admiral Eastern Europe Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Defense	20.00	0.00
Admiral Central America Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Shipping	20.00	0.00
Admiral Caribbean Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Logistics	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Pacific Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Retail	20.00	0.00
Admiral Europe Pacific Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Food & Beverage	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Pacific Growth Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Pharmaceuticals	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Pacific Income Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Biotechnology	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Pacific Bond Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Environmental	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Pacific Equity Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Infrastructure	20.00	0.00
Admiral Asia Pacific Global Trust Ltd	24.00	0.00	Worldwide Real Estate	20.00	0.00
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Old boxers don't always fade away, some succeed in real life

A FELLOW toiler in this trade, a former colleague whose work is usually of the highest order, wrote earlier this week that the fate of some fighters is to take up residence under railway bridges; many, he stated, drift into the nether world of alcoholism and drug addiction or meet a violent death in domestic and gangland disputes.

If there are any statistics on this I would like to see them. How many fighters have died by gun, knife or needle, how many end up as drunks or derelicts? Boxing puts the senses so obviously at risk that nobody should ever think it a game but in proportion to other sports and professions it has no monopoly on sad figures.

David Bairstow's recent suicide was a winning reminder that more than 30 cricketers have died at their own hands this century; old footballers of distinction who were criminally underpaid exist on a state pension, lost in nostalgia, many crippled by arthritis and refused disability benefits.

Trouble is that boxers are too easily the subject of B-movie conclusions; mumbled, beaten-up old pugs with cauliflower ears who hang around gymnasiums, adopting a fighting stance when woken by the telephone; from champion to bucket carrier; running errands for hoodlums.

An Olympian in his 17th year, Colin Jones held the British and

European welterweight championships and went in three times for the world title. An astute businessman, if Jones looks at a bridge he is probably thinking about buying it. The former British and Commonwealth middleweight champion Johnny Pritchett took off for Spain with the substantial proceeds of his commercial acumen.

Still one of British sport's most revered figures, Henry Cooper is never short of an earner; John Conteh, Jim Watt and John H. Stracey, all former world champions, are well paid for speaking at corporate luncheons and testimonial dinners. Watt, Barry McGuigan, Glenn McCrory and Duke McKenzie are employed regularly



KEN JONES

on television. Two members of my golf club, both comfortably off, once earned a living in the professional ring.

Pro rata, there are no more drunks among old boxers than there are among old journalists. An acclaimed sportswriter slipped so

far through booze that, in time, he could be given no greater responsibility than the dog racing results, and that out of sympathy.

Arthur Christiansen shot to fame as editor of the Daily Express as the result of his late night response to news of the R101 airship disaster. The lone sub-editor who assisted Christiansen in that enterprise ended up bumming drinks and cigarettes in Fleet Street bostelries.

Among the guests at a birthday party I attended last weekend was Bobby Neill, who was British featherweight champion almost 40 years ago. After losing the title to Terry Spinks, whom he later trained, Neill fell into a coma and spent

several days on the danger list. Neill's wicked sense of humour remains in place and he continues to train fighters. At sixty-odd Neill has memory lapses but then so do others of a similar age, myself included.

Many years ago the boxing promoter Mickey Duff refused the Kray twins admission to the opening of the Anglo-American Sporting Club at the Hilton hotel in London. So much for gangsterism in modern boxing.

There have been more than enough ring tragedies to make a case against boxing. Plenty of evidence to establish that fighters are unlikely to reach later life without displaying symptoms of the

punishment they have taken. Who can look at Muhammad Ali and not be saddened? Who could observe Joe Louis gladbanding from a wheelchair at Cessna Palace in Las Vegas without realising how much boxing can take from them? The sight of Sugar Ray Robinson being prodded into glazed acknowledgment to a warm response to his presence at ringside was withering.

Such things have long since intruded on my conscience, making me think that boxing may not be worth the candle. But drunks and drug addicts, victims of gang violence and living under railway bridges? If that is the case I have not been paying attention.

McCarthy's triumph for a college education

Phil Shaw talks to the Birmingham graduate determined to enjoy a class reunion in the FA Cup on Saturday

EVEN by the standards of Andy Warhol's famous-for-15-minutes dictum, Jon McCarthy looked to have been short-changed. All he got was 10 as substitute for Hartlepool and then... nothing.

McCarthy's first appearance, as a 17-year-old to whom the gathering of 1,002 seemed "a big crowd", was nearly his last. He

was allowed to drift off to college in Nottingham, where he subsidised his rent by earning £25 a game from Shepsbed Charterhouse while consoling himself that he at least had played League football.

And that might have been that had the management duo who gave him his debut, John Bird and Alan Little, not resurfaced at York two and a half years later. When their small squad was depleted by injuries, they remembered McCarthy.

The student winger seized his second chance. As befits a late starter, he has crammed more into the ensuing years than most players do into two decades. A bronze medal from the World Student Games was followed by promotion to York. Then came a £450,000 transfer to Port Vale and World Cup combat with Northern Ireland.

Last September brought a £1.5m switch to Birmingham, equalling their highest outlay, and with it the possibility of Premiership football. On Saturday the First Division play-off contenders will be striving to reach the FA Cup quarter-finals at the expense of Leeds, a contest which the 27-year-old Teessider awaits with even greater anticipation than usual.

One reason is the prospect of meeting his progress against that of David Wetherall, a team-mate and friend from the British student side who is now vice-captain and defensive mainstay for the Yorkshire club. He is also determined to make more of his second experience of the fifth round than he did of the first, which by coincidence was also against Leeds.

"David was the one who stood out in the 1991 Games in Sheffield," McCarthy recalled. "He'd just been transferred from Wednesday to Leeds and you could already see he had that something extra."

"He had to speak at the opening ceremony because he was the local boy. I remember it well because Helen Sharman, the British astronaut,



FA CUP COUNTDOWN



Kick-start: Jon McCarthy says his televised FA Cup performances have been instrumental in helping his career

Photograph: Peter Jay

dropped the torch and the flame went out!"

Britain reached the semi-finals before losing to the Dutch. They beat Uruguay to take third place, after which McCarthy, by now a BSc in Sports Science, graduated to the full-time ranks at York.

John Rudge made him Vale's record buy in 1995. It was hardly the most glamorous of moves - "no one else wanted me," McCarthy said with disarming candour - but within six months circumstances conspired to bring his blend of touchline trickery and hard graft to a wider audience.

The Potteries club forced a deserved draw at Everton, then the FA Cup holders. "Only a handful of ties were

played because of the weather. Goodison Park has under-soil heating, so ours was one of them."

"All the postponements meant it also became *Match of the Day*. I had one of my best games and Trevor Brooking highlighted some of the things I did that night. What a difference one programme can make."

McCarthy's reputation was further enhanced when he scored the winner in the replay from a cross by fellow winger Steve Guppy - now of Leicester and England B - to earn a reunion with Wetherall at Eland Road.

"We were the better team in a 0-0 draw and I went from hero to villain by missing a good chance. We went a goal up at

Vale Park, but once Gary McAllister equalised Leeds just kept getting stronger and won 2-1."

It was then that he was claimed by Northern Ireland, his grandmother's birthplace. Although Keith Gillespie remains first choice in his position, McCarthy's cap collection includes one gained against Italy - Maldini, Zola, Casiraghi, Del Piero et al - amid the firecrackers of a Sicilian friendly last winter.

Even then, Trevor Francis' interest was an open secret. Once, McCarthy was walking near his home in Cheshire when a Birmingham exile on a hike pulled up and demanded to know when he would be signing. Within months the deal had gone through, one of Francis'

40 in 20 months, but there was to be no overnight success.

"When I first joined Vale they failed to win any of the opening 10 home games. It was a club record. I made my Birmingham debut at home to Sunderland when a win would have put us top. We lost, and won one of the next 15 to end up in mid-table."

Dubbed "The Jinx" by one fog-horn fan, McCarthy gradually won over the St Andrew's crowd. Last month's stunning 7-0 win at Stoke underlined his growing influence on a fast improving side, though the sight of an ex-Vale man crashing in No 5 did not go down well with the locals.

"I'd turned away to celebrate with Paul Furlong when, apparently, this fan charged on to

the pitch to have a go at me. Chris Marsden pushed Larus Sigurdsson [Stoke captain] towards him and he stopped him. One report said it was the most effective marking he did all afternoon."

Last weekend's draw with Middlesbrough, in which McCarthy scored against the club he idolised as a boy, found Francis' team in the kind of form that could trouble Leeds. The Premiership outfit struggle to break opponents down at home, whereas Birmingham have tended to travel well.

For the level-headed McCarthy, whose own odyssey began so inconspicuously at Hartlepool, the tie is a reminder of how far he has come as well as how close the winners will be to Wembley.

Hughes signs five-year deal with Arsenal

By Catherine Riley

STEPHEN HUGHES, who scored twice against Chelsea on Sunday, has finally signed a new five-year contract with Arsenal. Arsène Wenger, the Highbury manager, said: "It is important to keep talented young players at the club. I am looking to build for the future and Stephen is an important part of that future."

Wenger also said yesterday he was "very hopeful" that Ian Wright would be fit to face Crystal Palace in the FA Cup on Sunday, while Dennis Bergkamp's fear of flying means he will not be travelling with Marc Overmars for the Netherlands matches in the United States and Mexico, and so will be available for Arsenal's league game against Palace the following weekend.

Christian Gross, the Tottenham manager, yesterday pulled Chris Armstrong out of a reserve game to ensure the striker was fit to make his first senior start since November against Leicester at White Hart Lane on Saturday. Gross has to lead his attack with Armstrong, although he is not yet 100 per cent fit, because Jürgen Klinsmann, Les Ferdinand, Steffen Iversen and Rory Allen are all injured.

Klinsmann yesterday returned to training for the first time since fracturing his jaw a week ago and Gross expects the German to be playing again in about three weeks' time. There was good news for Ferdinand as well, after his damaged ligament turned out to be bruised, not torn as first feared.

Manchester United have put back the kick-off of their Good Friday match against Liverpool at Old Trafford by half an hour after religious groups objected to the original 3pm start, because that is the time they commemorate Christ's death.

Alex McLeish has swapped one struggling Scottish Premier Division side for another, after he left Motherwell to become the new manager of Hibernian yesterday.

Chris Kamara, the Stoke manager, is encouraging his players to defend at set pieces by firing them for not marking. He said: "Players are given a specific job to mark an opponent at set pieces. If they don't do that and it costs us points, it is going to cost them money."

● The United States defeated Brazil for the first time on Tuesday, beating the world champions 1-0 in the semi-final of the Concacaf Gold Cup in Los Angeles. The goal, from Predrag Radosavljevic, the former Everton and Portsmouth forward, not only put the Americans in the final of the 10-nation tournament, but was the first by a US player against Brazil in 68 years.

Time will be Gebrselassie's main rival

Athletics
By Simon Turnbull

HAILE GEBRSELASSIE came face to face yesterday with the rival he will confront in the National Indoor Arena on Sunday evening. The clock at the head of the back straight was not switched on, unlike the familiar beaming smile of the Ethiopian running phenomenon.

In the conspicuous absence of Daniel Komen, the adversary the athletics world wants to see him race, the challenge facing Gebrselassie in the Bupa Indoor Grand Prix will be to complete 10 circuits of the Birmingham track before the scoreboard's digits clock round to 4:54.07.

For all his undoubted accomplishments - three 10,000 metres world titles, an Olympic gold medal and 11 world records - the world beater who lived his early years in a mud hut remains too self-effacing to state that the odds are in his favour.

His glowing countenance yesterday, though, probably meant a little more than the fact that he happened to be at one with himself and the world.

"When you want to break a world record it is not an easy job," he said when asked about

his prospects of beating the indoor record for 2,000 metres. "I want to break this record but I am not saying I will do it. You never know what will happen in a race."

The record will be 11 years old on Saturday. It was set on the Inglewood track at the Los Angeles Times meeting, a last hurrah for Eamonn Coghlan, the Irishman known as "the Chairman of the Board" and proved to be his sixth and final indoor world record. It ought to fall within the compass of a runner who has clocked 3:31.76 for 1,500 metres and 7:26.14 for 3,000 metres in the current indoor season.

The latter performance, in Karlsruhe on 25 January, was Gebrselassie's 11th world record. Last Friday, though, it was eclipsed by Komen, who stopped the clock in Budapest in 7:24.90. It has left Gebrselassie holding just one global mark, the indoor best for 5,000m, and Komen intends to eclipse that in Stockholm a week today.

Gebrselassie defeated Komen over 5,000m in Zurich last summer but the Kenyan, three years his junior at 21, has confined three of his world records to history in the past seven months and also beaten

him to the landmark achievement of running two miles inside eight minutes. It seems as quickly as the Ethiopian establishes his credentials as the supreme distance runner of all time, his East African shadow emerges with a counter-claim of his own.

The fact is that both possess the talent of the all-time great. They just happen to be pushing back the human speed limit at the same time, in the same way as Sebastian Coe and Steve Ovett did at the height of Britain's golden middle distance era.

The pity is, like Coe and Ovett, their rivalry is being fought at arm's length - at the length of the clock arm, that is. Gebrselassie will be chasing Komen's 3,000m record when the Kenyan attacks his 5,000m figures in Stockholm.

"I don't know exactly when we will run together," Gebrselassie said. "I hope it will be in Zurich in August. The 5,000m there is very important."

And Sunday's meeting in Birmingham is very important for British athletics, launching as it does a new era of major domestic meetings. Gone in the wake of the British Athletic Federation's financial collapse are the days of appearance money for all.

With a budget of \$225,000 (£140,000), half that enjoyed by the other meetings on the Ricoh tour, only Gebrselassie and 13 other athletes are guaranteed payment simply for turning up.

"This is the way of the future," Ian Stewart, the meeting promoter, said. "Only those athletes who can put bums on seats will be paid to appear."

Those capable of beating the clock, though, will have bonus money to chase, too - in Gebrselassie's case \$20,000 for world record No 12 on Sunday.

TODAY'S NUMBER 74

The number of Vietnamese players and managers, from 11 of the 12 teams in the national championship, that have so far been implicated in match-fixing allegations. Truong Van Duong, captain of the Ho Chi Minh City Customs team, has led a stream of players surrendering to police, after he was threatened by bookies when a fixed match went wrong.

Whelan gives Wigan £2m ultimatum

Rugby League
By Dave Hadfield

WIGAN'S sugar daddy, Dave Whelan, has given the club's shareholders an ultimatum: hand over control or lose his vital financial backing.

Whelan, the owner of Wigan Athletic and sponsor of Super League, has sent an offer to shareholders that will cost him more than £2m if accepted. If not, he has warned, he will pull the rug from under a club which is more than £2m in debt.

"I've made it clear in the offer that if the shareholders accept then I will strive to take the club back up to where it was an where it should be," he said. "But I've also made it clear that if they do not want to sell the shares then I will walk away."

The matter will be debated at the club's AGM on 7 March. The converted second-rower Darren Fleary is the surprise choice at prop for Leeds' Silk Cut Challenge Cup tie against Castleford on Saturday. He is preferred to Barric McDermott, who is being eased back after a broken leg.

Dalton's 'sheer fear' of flying

Sailing
By Stuart Alexander

GRANT DALTON yesterday spoke of his "sheer fear" of pushing Merit Cup too hard in mountainous seas as the leading yacht in the Whitbread Round the World fleet hurtled on through the treacherous Southern Ocean yesterday.

Life in the "liquid Himalayas" on the 11th day of the fifth leg from New Zealand to Brazil is proving a disquieting experience even for a seasoned yachtsman like Dalton, who had been forced to use a larger spinnaker than was sensible in the conditions in order to keep pace with third-placed Toshiba, who was at times only 200 metres away.

"This is not safe at all, the way we are sailing now, but what choice do you have?" asked the New Zealander as Merit Cup averaged 20 knots in 40 knots of wind. Two hours after the sail change and with the boat out of control, Dalton "pulled the plug" and left Toshiba to it.

"It is a matter of balancing the need to push hard but not over the top," he said. "I think my sheer fear of what could happen stops that. Ten minutes after we had set our storm spinnaker again, there was

Toshiba trying to pull what was left of their spinnaker down."

The two boats racing side by side in wild seas was a dramatic scene. "As Toshiba starts to surf, the hull will come clear right back to the keel," Dalton said. "A huge plume of water rises above the topides and the boat is hurled into the trough. I have never seen a boat look like that before."

The leg leader, EF Education, was also flying, failing by less than two miles to beat Silk Cut's 24-hour record of 449.1 miles set on the second leg.

Greg Gendell, Bowman on Innovation Kvaerner, can testify to the anaesthetic effect of the cold. He did not discover the extent of a leg injury until he awoke for his next watch and found a large gash.

The contrast could not be greater for Silk Cut and EF Education. Collisions with icebergs and gear damage has left them averaging nine knots and the all-weather crew of EF are fighting boredom by knitting with wool normally used for sails.

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE (Miles log, 6,670 miles, Auckland, NZ, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil): 1 EF Education (Swi) P. Cayard 3,500 miles to finish; 2 Sweden Match (Swi) G. Kvarnstrom 2,800 miles to finish; 3 Toshiba (Jpn) P. Sandberg 2,800 miles to finish; 4 Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) K. Frostad 2,800 miles to finish; 5 Merit Cup (Monaco) G. Dalton 2,800 miles to finish; 6 Chinese Racing (Chn) D. Smith 2,800 miles to finish; 7 Sunreef (Uae) R. Harris 2,800 miles to finish; 8 Silk Cut (GB) L. Smith 2,800 miles to finish; 9 EF Education (Swi) G. Gullik 2,800 miles to finish.



Henry Blofeld's West Indies Update

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Culture clash on the slopes

Mike Rowbottom
reports from Nagano

WHETHER or not Ross Rebagliati's status as snowboarding's first Olympic champion has gone up in a puff of smoke, many observers feel the International Olympic Committee has only itself to blame following the Canadian's positive test for marijuana.

The Olympic movement has hastened to welcome a sport with a widely acknowledged reputation for recreational drug-taking, and the reaction from those who are familiar with the snowboarding ethos: what did you expect?

Rebagliati was due to learn early today if he was to become the first Canadian to be stripped of an Olympic gold medal since Ben Johnson in 1988.

The Court of Arbitration for Sports has been deliberating on whether the 22-year-old from Whistler, near Vancouver, should prevail in his appeal to remain as gold medalist. François Carrard, the director general of the IOC, reported a finding of 17.8 nanograms per millilitre of metabolised marijuana in the sample Rebagliati gave after Sunday's slalom final - above the limit of 15 nanograms set by the international federation, the FIS.

Carrard flatly denied, however, that the case was similar to that of Johnson - even though a gold medal was in question - saying it had not been an easy decision to take.

The IOC voting reflected that. The medical board was only 13-12 in favour of recommending a sanction to the IOC executive board, which upheld the decision 3-2 with two abstentions.

Canada's chef de mission, Carol Anne Letheren, who had to ask Ben Johnson to return his Olympic 100 metres medal at the Seoul Olympics 10 years ago following a positive steroid finding, said Rebagliati was devastated by the announcement and stressed that the drug had not been performance-enhancing.

"There is no doubt a social issue surrounding this," Letheren said. "Could or should the IOC be a social police force?"

She read a statement from Rebagliati in which he denied using marijuana since April last year, and maintained that he may have been a victim of passive smoking during a going-away party held in his honour on 31 January.

Letheren added: "Ross says he lives in an environment in which he is exposed to marijuana."

The statement caused a certain amount of guffawing among the attendant press.

What caused a degree of mystification, however, was a subsequent statement from the Canadian Olympic Association that Rebagliati had shown small traces of marijuana in tests taken in September and December, even though both results had been too negligible to show up as positive.

The ethos of snowboarding has evolved directly out of the longer established sport whence it sprang - surfing.

The man credited with starting snowboarding in 1965, Sherman Poppen, came up with the idea to enable his children to "surf" over the snow near their home in Michigan. He screwed together a pair of skis, which took on the name of a Snurfer.



Canada's Ross Rebagliati outpaces the opposition in the slalom on Sunday and (below) tries to keep a step ahead of the press yesterday

Photographs: AP and Reuters

As snowboarding has grown in popularity it has mirrored surfing in its expression of individualism, and its undertones of recreational drug use.

The latter, unsurprisingly, is not explicitly referred to by any of those who have come to compete in these Winter Olympics. But their biographical details say much about the sport's zeitgeist.

Most of the competitors are under 25, with some as young as 18. Surfing and skateboarding feature heavily among listed hobbies, as do mountain hiking, interneting, playing video games and sky diving.

Bertrand Dénervaud, of Switzerland, known in snowboarding circles as Berti, declares: "A perfect day for me is surfing in the morning and

playing golf with my friends in the afternoon."

This is a sport full of nicknames - "Joker", "Fuzzy", "Babs", "The Terminator". Musical tastes are for punk, hip-hop, and Reggae funk. This is Generation X - and no one owns up to anything remotely uncool.

The quintessential snowboarding activity - an extended sequence of flips, twists and turns in a U-shaped channel of snow known as the half-pipe - takes place at Kanbayashi Snowboard Park today.

Since 1990, the number of snowboarders in the United States has grown to an estimated 4.5 million, making it the fastest growing sport in that country. That kind of popularity, which is reflected also in Europe, guarantees television

ratings and has proved an irresistible lure to the IOC.

"If anyone says the Olympics isn't about ratings, they're lying," said Todd Richards, one of the US snowboarders here.

Richards is one of many snowboarders who have expressed grave reservations about a sport whose whole essence is alternative becoming subsumed into the Olympic movement. That has always been the domain of the skiers who have spent the last 10 to 15 years vainly shaking their fists at the raggedy upstarts invading their slopes.

There are still a number of European venues where snowboarders are not welcome; indeed, they are still officially banned from the very slopes on



which they are contesting the Olympics.

The man commonly acknowledged as the world's foremost snowboarder, the 23-year-old Norwegian Terje Haakonsen (aka "Legend") boycotted the Winter Olympics

in protest at the nature of the IOC. "There is a lot about these Games that is not my cup of tea," he told an Oslo paper. And there are many who regard the latest embarrassing incident as little more than a predictable storm in a teacup.

Image problem dictates banning of marijuana

By Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

MARIJUANA is a prohibited drug in Olympic sport because it conveys the wrong image - not because it is performance enhancing.

It is highly unlikely that Ross Rebagliati would have smoked a joint to boost his snowboarding skills. The pharmacological effects of the drug, set out in the British Medical Association's report on cannabis last year, include "distortion of space and time sense" - not an obvious advantage when hurtling down a couloir.

Much more likely, if he smoked it at all (he claims the last occasion was 10 months ago in April 1997), he did so for relaxation. Many athletes prefer it as a way of winding down to alcohol, which leaves performance-damaging after-effects.

However, as a recreational drug, marijuana has an image problem. The International Olympic Committee had been concerned about the misuse of the drug in the Olympic village and warned that it would test for marijuana in Atlanta in 1996. It was worried that reports of the world's greatest athletes sharing a joint in the evenings would send the wrong message to the millions of young fans for whom they serve as role models.

The problem with the IOC's position is that it does not allow any leeway for marijuana absorbed through passive smoking. The International Ski Federation, anticipating the defence that Rebagliati has put forward (that he had been hanging around in the wrong company), allows a blood level of 15 nanograms per litre in testing. Rebagliati was just over that limit at 17.8 nanograms.

Michele Verroken, the head of the drug testing programme for the UK Sports Council, said: "To get above 15 nanograms just by sitting in a room and absorbing it passively, you would have to be wearing protective goggles. You are talking very thick smoke."

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هكذا من الأصل

Yates under pressure to drop appeal

don't really need to look it over again."

Norman was sure he would be equally at home. "I look forward to playing at Houghton again," said the world No. 2, who played the course in the inaugural Alfred Duhalil Challenge—the Ryder Cup-style match between Southern African and Australasian teams—in 1995.

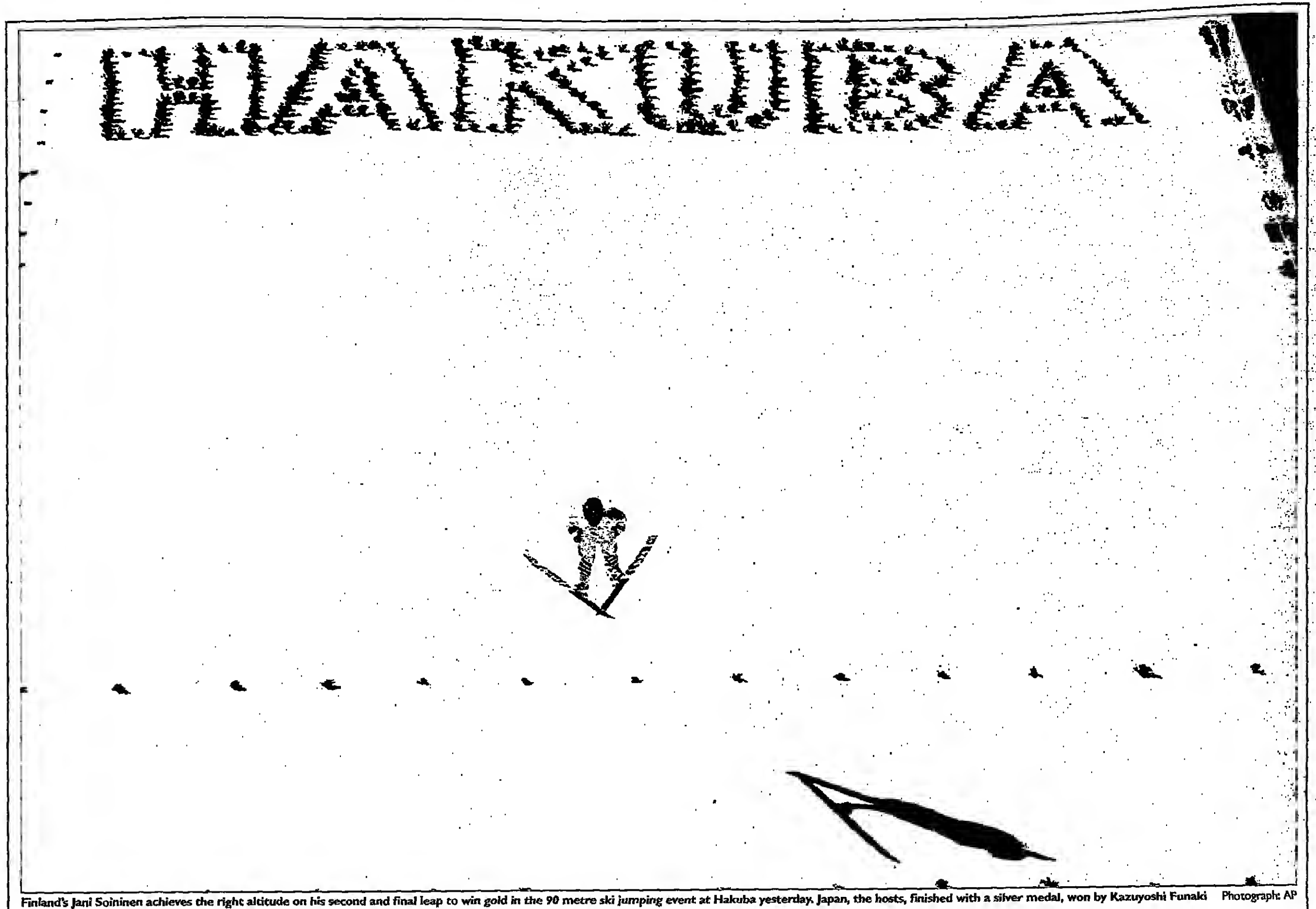
He also has a win in his own tournament—the Greg Norman

Struver, who has never quite lived up to that win, is back and so is Italy's Costantino Rocca and the Spaniard Ignacio Garrido, who chased Els and Frost hard last week in Durban before falling away in the final, round to end in the pack.

The Zimbabwean Mark McNulty is also there among 'those always challenging and with Frost and Retief Goosen heads a local challenge which also includes Nic Hemming and Marco Gortana.

Several members of the European Ryder Cup have put-cilled in their names for the Qatar Masters at Doha next month.

The Cup captain Seve Ballesteros and fellow Spaniard Jose Maria Olazabal will be joined by Lee Westwood, Ian Woosnam, Darren Clarke, Costantino Rocca and Thomas Bjorn.



Finland's Jani Soininen achieves the right altitude on his second and final leap to win gold in the 90 metre ski jumping event at Hakuba yesterday, Japan, the hosts, finished with a silver medal, won by Kazuyoshi Funaki Photograph AP

Caddick and Headley on rebound

Cricket

ANDY CADDICK and Dean Headley were licking their wounds from public criticism in Port of Spain yesterday. Just how they react to it will have a significant bearing on England's Caribbean campaign.

Opposites temperamentally, the new-ball pair have nevertheless both been stung by the harsh words of the past two

days, including those of England's captain, Michael Atherton, and coach, David Lloyd. Atherton virtually accused them of costing England the second Test against the West Indies and Lloyd has also criticised their failure to put the ball consistently in the right place.

Lloyd said: "I told them on the last morning of the Test that they had to be themselves. I said 'if you perform as you can then we will win.' But they are now

getting three days in which to prepare themselves for the next Test and, if you get criticism, then any professional just has to roll up his sleeves and say he will show people what he can do. That's their challenge now."

Caddick is upset at being portrayed as the man who lost England the Test. He has been reluctant to talk about his poor performance, going 30 overs without a wicket on a pitch clearly made for his style of bowling.

He is also hurt that his 5 for 42 at The Oval in his previous Test last August to help defeat Australia - and that his record during the past year for England has been excellent - has been ignored. In other words, he simply had a bad Test.

In contrast, Headley has been happy to speak about his own second Test performance. He said: "I did not bowl as well as I can but I did get four wickets in the match and, in the

four Tests that I've now played since last summer, I've got 20 wickets. The main problem in the game was that, even though I looked like taking wickets, I was going for too many runs. "I accept that I did not get things quite right but in my last spell I got the nip back in to my bowling and in that spell I picked up the wickets of David Williams and Curtly Ambrose. "I felt I was getting my rhythm back and really hitting

the bat. Overall, it was very disappointing of course, but I don't think I should be getting too worried about my form."

Lloyd, meanwhile, has been boosted by several calls of support from the England hierarchy back home and hinted strongly that England will go into the third Test with an unchanged team.

Lloyd has been particularly impressed by the resilience of his senior quartet of players -

Alec Stewart, Nasser Hussain, Angus Fraser, and Jack Russell - who have had to suffer three failures in three tours to win a Trinidad Test.

"Those four are absolute bankers to come back strongly," Lloyd said. "I have also appreciated calls from the likes of chairman of selectors, David

Graveney, and from our board chairman, Lord MacLaurin. I believe that David has also spoken to every single player. "What irks is that we got into a position to win, but lost the game and it was very apparent why we lost it. You have simply got to put the ball in the right place on pitches like that."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3532, Thursday 12 February By Spunns Wednesday's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

ACROSS
1 Lifeless hair a barrier to further progress (8)
5 In which the chestnuts are kept firm (6)
9 Sir's way of dealing with the opposite sex? (8)
10 Take it Scamus is drunk (6)
11 Idle, frivolous, certain to be covered by this description? (8)
12 Stern way king encourages first person coming to court (6)
14 Bewitched for a time - sure (10)
18 Implements used to remove cylinder-heads (3-7)
22 Small opening affording view, formerly obstructed (6)

DOWN
2 Easily managed to get home to leave a note (6)
3 Is half the outcome of defence submissions? (6)
4 A number of football teams with the French disease (6)
6 Agree to write (10)
7 Where you'll get a reaction, applying match to pipe? (4-4)

23 English marquis pinching beret for a lark (8)
24 Double-edged Irish coin, counterfeit (6)
25 Produce object in surprisingly green environment (8)
26 Count is relatively insensitive (6)
27 Impractical fellow (8)

7 Exotic bouquet one's found in specialist shop (8)
8 Twilight activity, one supported by lower classes (8)
13 Making waves in a way that's unheard-of (11)
15 Greek hat Annie's wearing (8)
16 Waiting area from which you can see N African mountain rising (4-4)
17 A destiny which suppresses President's hunger (8)
19 Last part of agenda must be pared down (3-3)
20 Chance to finish off endlessly lecherous old master (6)
21 Measuring system's expressed in verse (6)

Merson's bee-line for place in France

Football

PAUL MERSON fixed the World Cup finals in his sights after an impressive international comeback as England B captain and then admitted: "Three years ago I thought I would be lucky to play football again."

It was then that Merson was at the nadir of his career with his well-documented gambling, alcohol and drugs problems and booked himself into an addiction clinic.

But those dark days are behind the former Arsenal player, who is reaping the dividends from his determination to make the most of being given a second chance.

He made his first international appearance for 12 months in Tuesday's B encounter with Chile at The Hawthorns in front of England coach Glenn Hoddle and led by example in being head and shoulders above anybody else on the pitch.

Merson revelled in the freedom of operating just behind strikers Emile Heskey and Darren Huckerby as opposed to the centre-forward role he is generally used in by Middlesbrough.

He said: "The fact that Glenn Hoddle wanted me to play was very encouraging and to be honest I would rather have done that than maybe sit in the stand after training with the seniors."

"Don't get me wrong, it is great to be in the first-team squad, but I need to play to prove and to show to everybody what I can do - and I was pleased with my performance."

"I think you have to put to one side that people like Glenn Hoddle and John Gorman are watching. It's easy to get caught up in things and be like a 15-year-old trialist in trying to beat the world when you first get the ball."

"At the moment I am on the fringe of the squad. I've just kept saying to myself 'give it your all, I'd hate to think I didn't make it when there was still a bit more in the tank to give."

"If I give everything, play well for my club and any B games I'm selected for and miss out then I could then live with myself."

He added: "If someone had said three years ago that I would be leading my country out, it is something I could just not have imagined happening."

"Three years down the line, I was thinking I would have been lucky to come out and play football again. It's been a great honour for me. People say 'England B, so what?' but it's one of the highest honours I've had in the game and I include all the trophies I've won with Arsenal when saying that. There was no problem motivating myself."

"I was the oldest there and the young lads in the squad do look up to you in training and

in the way they talk to you. It shows how far I've come down the line and it was important to lead by example."

He said: "I find that is my best position. I don't play there for my club - which I'd like to. But we just haven't got enough centre-forwards at Middlesbrough for me not to have to play in the forward role."

"If I went to the World Cup I don't think I would be going as a centre-forward. There are too many forwards in front of me. If I have a chance of going it's in Tuesday's role but I can play a few positions."

Despite England's 2-1 reversal, Merson believes there is a well of young English talent emerging and is predicting great things for Huckerby and Heskey.

He said: "They are good young players. Maybe they won't make it in time for this World Cup, but they have got plenty of time on their hands."

"Huckerby gets at players and is very direct. He's come on so much for someone who has been playing regular Premiership football for barely a year. He's going to be a very good player."

"Heskey makes great runs and has great pace and he certainly made my job easier. Playing at this level can only make the likes of him and Huckerby into better players. Believe me when I say that in four years they will be big stars in the World Cup."

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